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Entre Oriente y Occidente:

paisaje y conflicto en la Antigüedad

Guillermo
Escolar
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**Guillermo
Escolar**
E D I T O R
Análisis y crítica

BLOOD ON THE WORLD'S HANDS: A GENOCIDE IN GAZA

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Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

One day, another killing
Somewhere, there's someone starving
Another, a savage raping
Meanwhile, there's someone laughing
at us
«Blood on the World's Hands» – Iron
Maiden, *The X-Factor* (1995)

I hate starting the paper, like many students' essays, by giving a definition. However, since the term would likely be controversial –as the discussions in Liverpool's Classicists list showed, for example–, it is necessary to be very precise about it. According to Article 2 of the UN's Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide:

[...] genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- a. Killing members of the group;
- b. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- c. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- d. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- e. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

At some point in the aforementioned online discussions, some colleagues have argued that Classics should not be politicised. First, for those colleagues, this really means that Classicists should not meddle with politics *they dislike/disagree with*. Second, Classics (and Classicists) have always been political. However, as far as Classics were involved with politics *they did like* (such as colonialism and imperialism) or endorsed supremacist, racist, sexist, or classist agendas, they seemed not to notice or denounce that

political use of Classics or, at least, they did not feel uncomfortable about them at all. Third, scholars should not live in ivory towers, secluded from the world they live in. Should I remind my colleagues that humans were defined by Aristotle (*Pol. I. 1253a9*) as *zoon politikón*? Or should I invoke Solon's law against those not taking sides in a civil strife (Arist. [Ath. Pol.] 8.5; Plut. *Vit. Sol. 20.1*)? Therefore, scholars *can* and *should* be involved in public discussions as members of the society they live in. Obviously, it is up to everyone if they really want to actively participate in these debates, but no one can coerce everybody else's liberty to stand up and speak up for any topic they feel concerned about. This is gatekeeping of the worst kind –almost verging on McCarthyism and censorship. Moreover, it can be easily argued that, in this case, we are not dealing with politics: it is a matter of humanity. Finally, ancient history (or rather ancient mythology) has been distorted by Zionism to endorse its claim for those lands. Thus, it is the Ancient Historians and Classicists' duty to denounce the political and pseudohistorical interpretation of the past for backing up the establishment of a colonial state in the region.

Before moving on, I should notice, because many seem to mischievously blur the difference, that antisemitism and anti-Zionism are not the same. I am perfectly aware that those who easily raise accusations of 'antisemitism' against anyone who shows solidarity with the Palestinian people and cause know the difference, but they prefer to tendentiously use this term because of its strongest historical connotations. Antisemitism is directed against people, and it is inherently wrong and xenophobic –just like Islamophobia. For example, it could include assertions like considering others as 'sub-humans' –echoing the words of Arieh King, Jerusalem Deputy Mayor¹, 'horrible, inhuman animals' –as expressed by former Israel's Ambassador to the UN, Dan Gillerman², or 'human animals' – in the words of the Israeli Defence Minister, Yoav Gallant³. Anti-Zionism, in turn, is directed against an ideology or movement, materialised in the [redacted] state of Israel nowadays, but not against its inhabitants nor, even less, against the Jewish people elsewhere. It is legit ideological or political opposition, just like anti-capitalism or anti-fascist. Moreover, there are many non-Zionist Jews individuals and organizations that have been denouncing the occupation and the genocide in Gaza for decades. And they have been also object of persecution by West-

¹ <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/factcheck/2023/12/14/israeli-official-called-hamas-subhuman-fact-check/71918947007/>; last access on 23/01/2024.

² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fr24GcCDgyM>; last access on 23/01/2024.

³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZbPdR3E4hCk>; last access on 24/01/2024.

ern authorities⁴. So equating antisemitism and anti-Zionism is as stupid as equating antifascism with anti-Italianism or anti-Nazism with Germanophobia. Funny enough, the fervent antisemitic European far-right, heirs of those who committed the Holocaust, now back up Zionism⁵. Quite telling.

In turn, Zionist bigots are quick to equate defending basic human rights with 'spreading Hamas propaganda'. They forget that Hamas is not Palestine/Gaza, nor are all the Palestinians/Gazans Hamas fighters⁶. Likewise, they omit that up to 198 Palestinians in the West Bank (so nothing to do with Hamas) had already been killed in 2023 by the IDF or illegal Israeli settlers *before* October 7th. From that date until February 28th, 2025, 892 West Bank Palestinians were assassinated⁷. On the other hand, the most cautious Zionists seem to distinguish between the actions of Benjamin Netanyahu's government and the stances of the citizens of Israel. Nice try. A poll published in mid-January 2024 showed how⁸, even though most Israelis considered that their government had no definite goals for that war, they also thought that the force deployed by the IDF was proportionate (50.8%) or even that it was too little (43.4%). Likewise, 66.1% of them reckoned that the number of Palestinian casualties was completely justified and 21.3% that it was relatively justified. Finally, more than half of the respondents completely (35.1%) or relatively (17.4%) endorsed the establishment of Israeli settlers in the Gaza Strip at the end of the (extermination) campaign. One could think that the results were a result of Jingoism in the first months of the conflict. A quick look at polls dating from March 2025 reveals that up to 63.2% of Israel's citizens were opposed to peace negotiations. On the

⁴ See, for example: https://www.democracynow.org/2024/10/15/jvp_protest_new_york_stock_exchange; https://www.democracynow.org/2025/3/14/jvp_sitin_trump_tower_mahmoud_khalil; last access on 14/04/2025.

⁵ The Hungarian, far-right Prime Minister, Viktor Orban, is famous for his antisemitic rhetoric: <https://www.politico.eu/article/viktor-orban-anti-semitism-problem-hungary-jews/>; last access on 14/04/2025. However, he hosted Benjamin Netanyahu in his country, although there was an active ICC arrest warrant against Israel's chief genocide: <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/04/03/world/hungary-withdraws-icc-intl/index.html>; last access on 14/04/2025.

⁶ Cf. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/israel/what-palestinians-really-think-hamas>; last access on 28/01/2024.

⁷ <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-98-earhe>; last access on 23/01/2024; <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/west-bank-l-monthly-snapshot-casualties-property-damage-and-displacement-28-february-2025>; last access on 14/04/2025.

⁸ <https://en-social-sciences.tau.ac.il/peaceindex/archive/2024-01>; last access on 31/01/2024.

establishment of Israeli settlers in Gaza, almost half of the respondents still backed up that option. Furthermore, 61.8% of them supported evacuating Palestinians from the Strip, even by force and military means, to other countries⁹. It looks, therefore, that Netanyahu is not an extremist, but the paramount example of a Zionist. Just as a matter of example, hundreds of Israelis blocked humanitarian aid trucks from entering Gaza at Kerem Shalom pass¹⁰. Up to 2,987 attacks against Palestinians by West Bank *Braunhemden* (sorry, I meant Zionist settlers) had been reported from January 2023 to February 2025 – 862 of them before October 7th¹¹.

However, this paper is not only about the ongoing genocide in Gaza (I guess this counts as a spoiler of its conclusions). It is neither about the Nakba, which started in 1948 (or even before?) – and has never really ended. It is about Alexander's attack on Gaza more than two thousand years ago (Romane 1988; Antela-Bernárdez 2012: 123–127). Could it be considered a genocide (too)?

SIEGES AND SHELLINGS

Unlike the current 'Gaza Nakba 2023' – do not blame me, I am just using the Israeli minister Avi Dichter's terminology¹² with its numerous reports¹³, there are only two main sources which detail the siege and assault of Gaza by the Macedonian troops: Curtius and Arrian. However, some aspects or episodes of them are passingly referred to in other secondary traditions (Spina 1989). Among them, the most important here is the widespread conception that the city was utterly destroyed (Str. XVI. 2.30). After the long and costly

⁹ <https://en-social-sciences.tau.ac.il/peaceindex/archive/2025-03>; last access on 14/04/2025.

¹⁰ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68103641>; last access on 31/01/2024.

¹¹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/west-bank-1-monthly-snapshot-casualties-property-damage-and-displacement-28-february-2025>; last access on 14/04/2025.

¹² <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/gaza-nakba-israels-far-right-palestinian-fears-hamas-war-rcna123909>; last access on 22/01/2024.

¹³ Of course, not during the recurrent communication blackouts (nine in total by January 18th, 2024) that Gaza faced since the beginning of the war (<https://edition.cnn.com/2024/01/18/middleeast/gaza-communications-blackout-one-week-israel-hamas-intl/index.html>; last access on 23/01/2024). And, evidently, if any Palestinian journalist (and their families) survives the undeniable targeting by the IDF. The death toll has already surpassed the figure of two hundred Palestinian journalists and media workers killed by Israel: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/9/23/israel-is-deliberately-targeting-journalists-in-gaza-experts>; <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2025/4/7/targeted-killed-burned-alive-journalists-in-gaza-attacked-by-israel>; last access on 14/04/2025.

siege of Tyre, Alexander was not eager to face another situation like that and Gaza paid the price for putting up resistance (Polyb. xvi. 22a.5). In this case, therefore, the order was different: the ITF (I meant IDF; sometimes I mix up 'Defense' and 'Terrorist', I wonder why) first attacked Gaza and, afterwards, they blitzed Lebanon (and Yemen, and Syria, and Iran). A hyper-active bully, as it can be seen.

Alexander approached the city, established the camp, and blockaded the city, not an unfamiliar tactic¹⁴. He started the operations to take the city by building a mound¹⁵, where siege engines were deployed. The siege engines started heavily bombarding the city walls (Arr. *Anab.* II. 26.2-4; Curt. IV. 6.7-10) –in this case, we are pretty sure the Macedonians did not use illegal white phosphorus munitions¹⁶, or cluster bombs¹⁷. Additionally, Alexander's troops started digging tunnels to undermine the walls and prompt their collapse (Arr. *Anab.* II. 27.4; Curt. IV. 6.8-9). Could they be the same tunnels that the IDF allegedly discovered under Al-Shifa Hospital? They did not seem to have been used by Hamas as a command centre, so perhaps they are older, and they might actually be actually a major archaeological discovery¹⁸. However, it would be better not to say that out loud, just in case the tunnels could now be targeted as part of the thorough destruction of the Palestinian historical and cultural heritage undertaken by Israel¹⁹.

¹⁴ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/defense-minister-announces-complete-siege-of-gaza-no-power-food-or-fuel/; last access on 24/01/2024. Up to half a million Gazans were under Zionist siege: <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/half-million-civilians-caught-northern-gaza-siege-within-siege-oxfam>; last access on 15/04/2025.

¹⁵ On the relative order of the events, especially concerning the construction of the mound, cf. Brunt 1976: 217 n. 1; Bosworth 1980: 258-259; Antela-Bernárdez 2014: 64-65.

¹⁶ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/10/12/israel-white-phosphorus-used-gaza-lebanon>; last access on 24/01/2024.

¹⁷ <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/hezbollah-accuses-israel-of-using-internationally-banned-cluster-bombs-in-southern-lebanon/3363266>; last access on 15/04/2025.

¹⁸ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/12/21/al-shifa-hospital-gazaamas-israel/>; last access on 24/01/2024. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2023/11/23/idf-gaza-hospital-tunnels-director-arrested/>; last access on 24/01/2024. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/nov/23/israels-army-arrests-gaza-hospital-director-and-bombs-300-targets-amid-truce-delay>; last access on 24/01/2024. <https://theintercept.com/2023/11/21/al-shifa-hospital-hamas-israel/>; last access on 24/01/2024.

¹⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/gallery/2024/jan/11/palestinian-cultural-heritage-gaza-destruction-in-pictures>; last access on 24/01/2024. <https://www.npr.org/2023/12/03/1216200754/gaza-heritage-sites-destroyed-israel>; last access on 24/01/2024.

Additionally, it should be noted that modern international humanitarian law bans ‘collective punishment’²⁰. Therefore, the voluntary deprivation of food, water, medical supplies, and fuel to Gaza constitutes a flagrant violation of it²¹. Nevertheless, Israeli soldiers boasted of burning food supplies in videos²². After all, the notion of ‘collective punishment’ as a legit reprisal was sanctioned by the Israeli president, Isaac Herzog, so no surprise that the troops acted that way²³. But starvation can never be a weapon²⁴ –and if, after that, you recurrently shoot at desperate Palestinians gathering to get humanitarian aid, this is but a display of pure evil²⁵.

The ancient Gazans tried to break the siege, and there was an especially vigorous sally of the defenders. The Arabs aimed at setting fire to the engines (Arr. *An.* II. 27.1), and, moreover, according to Curtius (IV. 6.15–16) and Hegesias of Magnesia (*FGrH* 142 F 5 *apud* Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 18.26), one of them directly attempted against Alexander’s life. Wait a minute... Arabs? But Palestinians are supposed to be Arabs who arrived in the region not earlier than the seventh century BCE, aren’t they? This is a mistake, right? Arrian (*Anab.* II. 25.4) states that they were mercenaries recruited by Betis, the Persian commander of the city²⁶. What is more, according to Diodorus (XVII. 48.7), Gaza was garrisoned by Persians. Good news for Israeli propaganda: Iranians were behind Gazan resistance. Were Betis and the Persian troops members of the Revolutionary Guard Corps? Say no more. Proba-

²⁰ <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v1/rule103>; last access on 28/01/2024.

²¹ <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/gciv-1949/article-55?activeTab=default>; last access on 28/01/2024. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/10/23/israel-still-blocking-aid-civilians-gaza>; last access on 28/01/2024. <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15473.doc.htm>; last access on 28/01/2024. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/10/israel-opt-israel-must-lift-illegal-and-inhumane-blockade-on-gaza-as-power-plant-runs-out-of-fuel/>; last access on 28/01/2024.

²² <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/12/15/middleeast/israeli-soldiers-burningfood-gaza-intl/index.html>; last access on 28/01/2024.

²³ <https://news.yahoo.com/israeli-president-says-no-innocent-154330724.html?guccounter=2>; last access on 29/01/2024.

²⁴ <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/starvation-weapon-war-being-used-against-gaza-civilians-oxfam>; last access on 29/01/2024.

²⁵ <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/02/29/middleeast/gaza-food-truck-deaths-israel-wwk-intl/index.html>; last access on 01/03/2024. <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/03/05/middleeast/israel-fire-palestinians-aid-northern-gaza-intl/index.html>; last access on 15/03/2024; <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/03/14/middleeast/blast-kill-palestinians-food-aid-gaza-intl/index.html>; last access on 15/03/2024.

²⁶ On Betis’ identity and position, see Atkinson 1980: 334–336; Bosworth 1980: 257–258; Heckel 2006: 71.

bly, further investigation will show that other Levantines and Syrians (cf. Polyb. XVI. 22a.5), that is, Hezbollah fighters were among the city defenders as well. However, those Arab mercenaries were not necessarily foreigners but locals since Arab tribes –either Qedarites or Nabataeans– were already demographically dominant in that region in the fourth century BCE (cf. Atkinson 1980: 335, 339). In any case, it is likely that local Arabs and Persians fought and died side by side in Gaza against the Macedonians (Curt. IV. 6.30; cf. Atkinson 1980: 343; Bosworth 1980: 258).

As Atkinson (1980: 343) explained, the introduction of the attempt on Alexander's life into the narrative aimed at justifying the king's harsh retribution against Betis and the defenders of Gaza once the city was captured. The attack against Alexander is presented as treacherous and unmotivated. Thus, Alexander's subsequent actions appear as a response to a disloyal attempt, disregarding the actual circumstances: the ongoing Macedonian siege and bombardment of the city. For example, it would be like presenting the Israeli attacks against Gaza solely as a reaction after Hamas' deadly incursion into territory under the control of Israel. That would represent omitting basic facts, like that up to 237 Palestinians had already been killed by the IDF or settlers during 2023 before October 7th²⁷. Or neglecting that since 2008, 6,417 Palestinians had been assassinated and up to 153,431 injured²⁸. Or hiding the Zionist occupation of the Palestinian territories since 1967, or the Nakba in 1948, which included several episodes of ethnic cleansing in Arab towns like Tantura²⁹. Or omitting that the conditions imposed by Israel over the Palestinians have been likened to apartheid by main human rights organisations, like Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch³⁰. Obviously, this (and nothing, in fact) does not justify nor lessen Hamas' vile attacks on October 7th, but they must be put within a wider frame. They

²⁷ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/7/sirens-warn-of-rockets-launched-towards-israel-from-gaza-news-reports>; last access on 24/01/2024.

²⁸ Data on fatalities and injuries since 2008 can be found in <https://www.ochaopt.org/data/casualties>; last access on 24/01/2024. Israeli casualties totalled 30 dead (an 8:1 ratio) in 2023. Since 2008, Israeli casualties have added up to 310 victims and 6,361 injured (about 21:1 and 24:1 ratio, respectively). On the other hand, it is very complicated to quantify the Palestinians displaced because of the growing attacks by Israeli illegal settlers.

²⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/may/25/study-1948-israeli-massacre-tantura-palestinian-village-mass-graves-car-park>; last access on 24/01/2024.

³⁰ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/MDE1551412022ENGLISH.pdf>; last access on 24/01/2024. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>; last access on 24/01/2024.

were not random attacks, but they belong to a conflict that started more than 75 years ago.

Besides the alleged attempt against his life, Alexander was also injured by a projectile during the siege³¹. The siege lasted for two months, and the defenders repelled up to three assaults, even though they were suffering great losses due to the heavy bombardment and the attacks of Alexander's soldiers. It is not unusual for the besiegers to try the foe's defences before the final assault on them. For instance, before the invasion of the Gaza Strip on October 27th, the IDF equally conducted three raids into the Palestinian territory³². Perhaps the great difference between both sieges is the absolute figures about casualties and the direct impact on civilians. In the case of the Macedonian attack, although missiles could eventually reach the interior of the city (Curt. IV. 6.23), the attack was mostly focused against the walls, manned with Arab and Persian defenders. Thus, the vast majority of casualties belonged to the fighters, not the civilians. Obviously, the number of casualties before the final assault could not reach modern figures. Curtius (IV. 6.30) states that 10,000 defenders had been killed at the end of the siege (*contra* Atkinson 1980: 343). Hegesias, in turn, seems to imply that 4,000 men were slaughtered by the Macedonians during the assault (*FGrH* 142 F 5 *apud* Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 18.26). Thus, combining the data from both authors, it could be conjectured that 6,000 defenders had been killed during the two months that the siege lasted.

In contrast, during the twenty days that the Israeli forces shelled Gaza before the ground invasion of the Strip, more than 7,000 Palestinians were killed and 18,000 were wounded³³. Most of them were civilians and refugee camps³⁴,

³¹ Arr. *Anab.* II. 27.1-3; Curt. IV. 6.17-20; Plut. *Vit. Alex.* 25.4-5; Mor. *De Alex. fort.* 327a, 341b; Zonar. IV. 10D; cf. Curt. IV. 6.23-24.

³² First raid on October 13th: https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/idf-infantry-troops-tanks-entered-gaza-for-localized-raids-to-clear-area-of-terrorists-locate-hostages/; last access on 24/01/2024. Second raid on October 25th: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-tanks-troops-briefly-push-into-gaza-strip-ahead-of-ground-offensive/>; last access on 24/01/2024. Third raid on October 26th: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-tanks-troops-briefly-push-into-gaza-strip-ahead-of-ground-offensive/>; last access on 24/01/2024.

³³ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/27/un-says-gaza-health-ministry-death-tolls-in-previous-wars>; last access on 24/01/2024.

³⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/09/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-market-air-strike-jabaliyah.html>; last access on 26/01/2024; <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/scores-killed-wounded-israeli-air-strike-gazas-al-shati-camp-health-ministry-2023-10-23/>; last access on 26/01/2024.

schools³⁵, hospitals³⁶, churches³⁷, mosques³⁸, and residential buildings³⁹ were targeted by the IDF. It is true that many of them no longer preserved their original function, but not because they were Hamas' facilities: most of those buildings worked as airstrike shelters for civilians.

ASSAULTS AND MASSACRES

The Macedonian final assault was merciless, a true bloodbath. The defenders of ancient Gaza, however, did not surrender and fought until the end. They were all annihilated (*Arr. Anab.* II. 27.7). As stated above, Curtius (IV. 6.30) estimated that 10,000 Persians and Arabs fell because of the siege and the assault. In contrast, Hegesias of Magnesia (*FGrH* 142 F 5 *apud* Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 18.26) wrote that 4,000 defenders were killed during the final assault. This author explicitly says that Alexander gave orders to his men to massacre the enemy troops in Gaza. Moreover, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who comments on this fragment, explains that the Macedonians also executed the prisoners. Therefore, they were not all killed in the heat of the battle, but some were executed in cold blood. Moreover, the sources seem to imply that all adult men were slaughtered, not only the garrison soldiers or the mercenaries.

Fortunately, there are modern provisions against summary executions of prisoners of war, banned by the Geneva Conventions of 1949. All POWs must be tried following the proceedings established in Chapter III. Israel has ratified the General Conventions and Protocol III, but not Protocols I and II. The first, in Article 1(4), «provides that armed conflicts in which peoples are fighting against colonial domination, alien occupation or racist

³⁵ <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/gaza-unrwa-school-sheltering-displaced-families-hit>; last access on 26/01/2024. <https://www.nbcnews.com/video/video-shows-purported-airstrikes-near-gaza-s-al-quds-hospital-195956293978>; last access on 26/01/2024.

³⁶ <https://www.anglicannews.org/news/2023/10/anglican-run-al-ahli-arab-hospital-in-gaza-damaged-by-israeli-rocket-fire-as-conflict-continues.aspx>; last access on 26/01/2024.

³⁷ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/10/20/gaza-church-strike-saint-porphyrius/>; last access on 26/01/2024.

³⁸ <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/israeli-bombing-destroyed-26-mosques-across-gaza-ministry/3028848>; last access on 29/01/2024.

³⁹ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/10/damning-evidence-of-war-crimes-as-israeli-attacks-wipe-out-entire-families-in-gaza/>; last access on 28/01/2024. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/11/gaza-destroying-civilian-housing-and-infrastructure-international-crime>; last access on 28/01/2024.

regimes are to be considered international conflicts»⁴⁰. The second protocol basically extended international law provisions to internal conflicts in the matter of humanitarian rights⁴¹. It has neither ratified Article 90 of Protocol I, which recognised the competence of the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission for investigating grave breaches of international humanitarian law⁴². It comes as no surprise that Israel has not ratified these protocols. Although, even if it had ratified them, it is quite probable that they would have been systematically violated by Israel, just like the rest of the provisions in Geneva Conventions recurrently are.

The official death toll of the Israeli attack against the Palestinians counts, by April 16th, 2025, has already surpassed the 50,000 people killed and 116,300 wounded in Gaza⁴³. The real number of fatal casualties is likely to be much higher⁴⁴, since up to 10,000 Gazan bodies may still be still under the rubble⁴⁵. The daily death rate in Gaza during the first months of the aggression was the largest for any other conflict in this century: about 250 Palestinians were killed by the IDF every day⁴⁶. The number of civilian casualties is disputed, between 61 and 90% according to different studies⁴⁷. Even with

⁴⁰ <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/api-1977>; last access on 24/01/2024.

⁴¹ <https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/eda/fr/documents/aussenpolitik/voelkerrecht/geneve/LISTE%20PARTIES%202005-PROT-3%20FR%20new.pdf>; last access on 25/01/2024.

⁴² <https://guide-humanitarian-law.org/content/article/3/international-humanitarian-fact-finding-commission/>; last access on 25/01/2024.

⁴³ The death toll from Gaza Health Ministry has been regarded as 'fairly accurate' even by IDF officers (https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/idf-officials-15000-likely-killed-in-gaza-since-start-of-war-5000-of-them-are-hamas/; last access on 28/01/2024). See also [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(23\)02713-7/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(23)02713-7/fulltext); last access on 28/01/2024. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/10/24/gaza-death-toll-palestinian-health-ministry/>; last access on 28/01/2024; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-15-april-2025>; last access on 16/04/2025.

⁴⁴ See, for example, a study published in The Lancet that estimated that more than 64,000 Palestinians had already been killed by June 2025: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(24\)02678-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(24)02678-3/fulltext); last access on 16/04/2025. It must be taken into account that this method does not include the missing under the debris.

⁴⁵ <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cn8xoomgjxmo>; last access on 16/04/2025.

⁴⁶ <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/daily-death-rate-gaza-higher-any-other-major-21st-century-conflict-oxfam>; last access on 28/01/2024. At some points in the war, it has surpassed the 300 Palestinians killed per day: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/12/22/gaza-israel-war-20000-dead/>; last access on 28/01/2024.

⁴⁷ 90% (Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, 05/12/2023): <https://euromedmonitor.org>.

the (Israeli) conservative figures –which only count as civilians the elderly, the women, and the children–, it stands as the deadliest war for civilians since the Second World War⁴⁸. Finally, it must be stressed that these figures do not include other indirect casualties, like those victims of starvation⁴⁹, lack of medical attention, shortages, power cuts⁵⁰, or disease. Estimating a precise number of indirect victims is almost impossible, but even in the most conservative scenario the ratio may be of four indirect deaths per each direct casualty⁵¹. Thus, in mid-April, 2025, more than 200,000 Palestinians might have been already killed by the colonial state of Israel and its European and North American promoters.

Articles 51 and 57 of the Geneva Conventions rule about the protection of the civilian population⁵². The clauses of the articles detail that the civilian population must not be the target of any attack, especially if they are indiscriminate or aimed at spreading terror among them. When civilian

org/en/article/6004; last access on 28/01/2024. 80% (El País, 21/01/2024): <https://elpais.com/internacional/2024-01-21/25000-muertes-en-gaza-por-que-la-destruccion-de-esta-guerra-supera-la-de-otros-grandes-conflictos.html>; last access on 02/02/2024. 74% (AOAV, 28/10/2024): <https://aoav.org.uk/2024/casualties-in-gaza-israels-claims-of-50-combatant-deaths-dont-add-up-at-least-74-of-the-dead-are-civilians/>; last access on 16/04/2025. 68,1% (Zeina Jamaluddine, Francesco Checchi, Oona M R Campbell, 26/11/2023): [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(23\)02640-5/fulltext#articleInformation](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(23)02640-5/fulltext#articleInformation); last access on 28/01/2024. 66% (Israel Military, 06/12/2023): <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/12/05/middleeast/israel-hamas-military-civilian-ratio-killed-intl-hnk/index.html>; last access on 28/01/2024. 61% (Yagil Levi, 09/12/2023): <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-12-09/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/the-israeli-army-has-dropped-the-restraint-in-gaza-and-data-shows-unprecedented-killing/0000018c-4cca-db23-ad9f-6cdae8ad0000>; last access on 28/01/2024.. See also <https://goodauthority.org/news/gaza-casualty-data/>; last access on 28/01/2024.

⁴⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/25/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-death-toll.html>; last access on 28/01/2024.

⁴⁹ In a letter addressed to the president Joe Biden and the vice president Kamala Harris, 99 American medical professionals who had worked in Gaza estimated that more than 62,000 people had died of starvation by October 2024: <https://www.gazahealthcareletters.org/usa-letter-oct-2-2024>; last access on 16/04/2025.

⁵⁰ Like premature babies who needed care in incubators: <https://time.com/6338832/gaza-al-shifa-hospital-rescue-mission-babies/>; last access on 02/02/2024.

⁵¹ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(24\)01169-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(24)01169-3/fulltext); last access on 16/04/2025.

⁵² <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/api-1977/article-51>; last access on 28/01/2024. <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/api-1977/article-57>; last access on 28/01/2024.

incidental casualties are expected, the principles of minimising harm and proportionality must prevail (Articles 57(2)(a)(ii-iii))⁵³:

- (ii) take all feasible precautions in the choice of means and methods of attack with a view to avoiding, and in any event to minimizing, incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians and damage to civilian objects;
- (iii) refrain from deciding to launch any 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.

It seems clear that Israel has not been observing this rule throughout the ongoing war and has repeatedly shown its disregard towards the application of international humanitarian laws⁵⁴. Like during the blockade and the operations that preceded the ground invasion of the Strip, the bombing of civilian structures such as hospitals⁵⁵, refugee camps⁵⁶, mosques⁵⁷, schools⁵⁸,

⁵³ <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v1/rule14>; last access on 28/01/2024.

⁵⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/02/world/middleeast/international-law-israel-hamas.html>; last access on 28/01/2024. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jill-goldenziel/2023/12/22/israels-actions-must-match-its-words-on-the-law-of-war/?sh=37e4e29f6555>; last access on 28/01/2024. <https://www.justsecurity.org/90789/israels-rewriting-of-the-law-of-war/>; last access on 28/01/2024.

⁵⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/10/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-hospitals-besieged.html>; last access on 29/01/2024. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/11/20/israel-hamas-gaza-hospitals/>; last access on 29/01/2024. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/29/palestine-red-crescent-says-israel-orders-evacuation-of-al-quds-hospital>; last access on 29/01/2024.

⁵⁶ Perhaps the deadliest and heinous attack was the bombing of Jabalia Refugee Camp: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2023/nov/01/israel-hamas-war-live-updates-gaza-internet-access-cut-off-egypt-jabalia-strike>; last access on 29/01/2024. <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/10/31/middleeast/jabalya-blast-gaza-intl/index.html>; last access on 29/01/2024. At least, two 2,000-pound bombs were dropped: <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/03/world/middleeast/israel-bomb-jabalya.html>; last access on 29/01/2024. The attack probably constitutes a war crime, which represents a clear disregard for the principle of proportionality, according to the UN: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/11/2/un-rights-office-says-israeli-attacks-on-jabalia-could-be-war-crime>;

⁵⁷ <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/59-mosques-destroyed-in-israeli-airstrikes-on-gaza-since-oct-7-interior-ministry/3047782>; last access on 26/01/2024.

⁵⁸ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2023/11/18/israel-hamas-war-live-conditions-worsen-as-another-baby-dies-at-al-shifa?update=2495283>; last access on 29/01/2024. <https://bnn.network/breaking-news/war/catastrophic-airstrike-on-gaza>

archives⁵⁹, libraries⁶⁰, universities⁶¹, museums and archaeological sites⁶², and residential buildings⁶³ has been incessant. I do not see how these attacks can be justified for strategic reasons⁶⁴. Additionally, invading Israeli soldiers have desecrated multiple cemeteries and burial trenches –and the bodies in them⁶⁵. Looting and other outrages committed by Zionist terrorists (another typo, I guess) have been filmed by the boasting perpetrators themselves, who usually use racist and dehumanising vocabulary and repeat genocidal-like slogans⁶⁶.

school-leaves-at-least-30-dead-100-injured/; last access on 29/01/2024. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2023/12/3/israel-gaza-war-live-israel-bombards-gaza-as-talks-break-down?update=2531409>; last access on 29/01/2024.

⁵⁹ <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2023/12/22/gaza-city-archives-among-heritage-sites-destroyed-in-israel-hamas-war>; last access on 29/01/2024.

⁶⁰ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/11/30/gaza-library-palestinian-culture/>; last access on 28/01/2024.

⁶¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/jan/19/alarm-as-israeli-forces-move-closer-to-crowded-areas-in-southern-gaza>; last access on 29/01/2024.

⁶² <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/5965/As-part-of-its-genocidal-war-in-Gaza,-Israel-destroys-Palestinians%20%99-cultural-heritage#:~:text=Israeli%20air%20and%20artillery%20attacks,ands%20has%20caused%20great%20destruction>; last access on 29/01/2024.

⁶³ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/world-bank-report-finds-45-of-residential-buildings-in-gaza-ruined-beyond-repair/>; last access on 29/01/2024. IDF soldiers are burning down civilian houses after occupying them: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-01-31/ty-article/.premium/israeli-army-occupies-gaza-homes-then-burns-them-down/0000018d-6021-d16e-a39f-7f3f01e30000>; last access on 02/02/2024.

⁶⁴ <https://www.972mag.com/mass-assassination-factory-israel-calculated-bombing-gaza/>; last access on 29/01/2024.

⁶⁵ <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/01/20/middleeast/israel-gaza-cemeteries-desecrated-investigation-intl-cmd/index.html>; last access on 28/01/2024. <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/12/23/middleeast/kamal-adwan-hospital-gaza-israel-abuse-allegations-intl-cmd/index.html>; last access on 28/01/2024. Accusations of organ theft have been also raised: <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/intl-committee-must-investigate-israels-holding-dead-bodies-gaza-enar>; last access on 28/01/2024.

⁶⁶ <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/amid-ongoing-genocide-gaza-systematic-israeli-theft-occurring-palestinian-civilian-homes-enar>; last access on 28/01/2024. <https://www.newarab.com/analysis/how-looting-israeli-soldiers-gaza-widespread>; last access on 28/01/2024. <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/12/15/middleeast/israeli-soldiers-burningfood-gaza-intl/index.html>; last access on 28/01/2024. <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2024/1/24/why-are-israeli-soldiers-sharing-snuff-videos-from-their-genocide-in-gaza>; last access on 28/01/2024. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/videos-of-israeli-soldiers-acting-maliciously-emerge-amid-international-outcry-against-tactics-in-gaza>; last access on 28/01/2024. <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/security-aviation/2024-02-04/ty-article/.premium/israeli-army-its->

Israel's disregard for Palestinian lives and the principles of humanitarian international law is transparently exemplified by the operation over Rafah: the rescue of two hostages (good enough, the IDF did not kill them afterwards this time)⁶⁷ cost the lives of over one hundred Palestinians in that refugee zone⁶⁸. That is: one Israeli life equals more than fifty Palestinian ones.

Besides targeting journalists, as addressed above, the Israeli military has also killed many workers of the UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East)⁶⁹. In the first months of 2024, Israel started an international campaign against this UN agency, claiming that it upheld (surprise, surprise) Hamas and that some of its members participated in the October 7th attacks. The Israeli report, however, fails to provide proof for the accusations against four to six UNRWA workers (out of 12,000 staffers, by the way)⁷⁰. Unfortunately, Israel's thugs, that is, the staunchly and blindly pro-Zionists Germany and the United States of America, along with some other first-world countries, cut the funding for this organization, which provides vital help to millions of Palestinian refugees⁷¹. After all, if you keep funding UNRWA, like Belgium, you risk getting your buildings bombed by Israel⁷². Strange diplomacy that of the so-called only democracy in the Middle East, isn't it? More than a year after the accusations against UNRWA, the claims have

admits-staff-was-behind-graphic-gaza-telegram-channel/0000018d-70b4-dd6e-a98d-f4b6a9c0000; last access on 04/02/2024.

⁶⁷ <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/3-israeli-hostages-tried-only-killed-military-rcna130912>; last access on 13/02/2024. It is very telling about the IDF's respect for human rights that the three Israeli hostages were waving a white flag before being shot dead.

⁶⁸ <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/02/12/middleeast/israel-airstrikes-rafah-ground-offensive-looms-intl-hnk/index.html>; last access on 13/02/2024. And no, the victims were not Hamas fighters; this figure reflects the casualties caused by the shelling of a dozen homes and two mosques where Palestinian refugees sheltered.

⁶⁹ By January 24th, 152 staffers had been killed: <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-69-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-Jerusalem>; last access on 30/01/2024.

⁷⁰ <https://news.sky.com/story/israeli-intelligence-report-claims-four-unrwa-staff-in-gaza-involved-in-hamas-kidnapping-13059967>; last access on 01/02/2024. <https://www.ft.com/content/bb8fc310-d359-4a31-b8e3-11a433b935f5>; last access on 08/02/2024.

⁷¹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/palestinians-gaza-see-unrwa-funding-cuts-death-sentence-2024-01-29/>; last access on 30/01/2024.

⁷² <https://www.brusselstimes.com/903021/belgium-to-keep-funding-unwra-pending-investigation-tbtb>; last access on 02/02/2024. <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/belgium-summons-israeli-ambassador-after-its-building-gaza-is-bombed-2024-02-02/>; last access on 02/02/2024.

not been substantiated by the Israeli *Propagandaministerium* and the *hasbara*⁷³. The ban on UNRWA operations was extended to East Jerusalem and the colonial territory in January, 2025⁷⁴.

UNRWA has not been the only aid or health organisation targeted by Israeli bombs and bullets. Members of the Red Cross/Red Crescent and Doctors Without Borders have been killed in attacks against ambulances, evacuation convoys, or medical facilities⁷⁵. Hospitals and patients have been systematically targeted, and the most basic human rights are no longer observed⁷⁶. Even though Israel always alleges that they were accidental attacks, every time a video emerges, it proves that they were deliberate, as the one suffered by a convoy of ambulances and fire trucks on March 23rd, 2025, in which fifteen medical workers were murdered by the IDF⁷⁷. And I say murdered because evidence shows that they were executed⁷⁸. Since the beginning of the war, more than one thousand health-care workers have been killed and more than three hundred have been arrested (or rather kidnapped) by the Zionist state, which recurrently seized the chance for torturing them too⁷⁹. The effect of the airstrikes, sieges, and Israeli-orde-

⁷³ <https://www.unrwa.org/unrwa-claims-versus-facts-2025>; last access on 16/04/2025.

⁷⁴ <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/government-israel-orders-unrwa-vacate-its-premises-occupied-east>; last access on 18/04/2025.

⁷⁵ <https://thehill.com/policy/international/4338868-msf-attack-convoy-deliberate-demanding-investigation/#:~:text=On%20Nov.%2018%20a%20convoy,the%20clinic%20the%20organization%20said;> last access on 30/01/2024. <https://www.npr.org/2023/11/16/1213307710/gaza-doctors-al-shifa-hospital>; last access on 30/01/2024. <https://www.statnews.com/2023/10/14/gaza-israel-hospitals-health-care-warzones/>; last access on 30/01/2024.

⁷⁶ One of the most disturbing incidents was the raid of a hospital in Jenin (West Bank) by an Israeli commando in disguise that assassinated three patients in cold blood. Obviously, Israel claimed they were terrorists, but even so, storming into a hospital and killing three men is a violation of international law. Even if they really were militants, they had to be detained (elsewhere), not summarily executed while sleeping. <https://time.com/6589954/israel-deadly-raid-ibn-sina-hospital/>; last access on 30/01/2024. It seems that Israel has learnt the lesson and they are no longer killing them in their beds. Now they kidnap patients, and I guess they kill them elsewhere. They still, however, disguise themselves as doctors, nurses, or female civilians: <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/12/05/middleeast/israel-nablus-hospital-undercover-raid-intl/index.html>; last access on 16/04/2025.

⁷⁷ <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4g2z103nqxo>; last access on 16/04/2025.

⁷⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/apr/02/evidence-execution-style-killings-palestinian-workers-israeli-forces-doctor-says>; last access on 16/04/2025.

⁷⁹ <https://theconversation.com/health-care-workers-should-not-be-a-target-in-gaza-their-detention-and-death-affect-the-entire-population-251146>; last access on 16/04/2025.

red forced evacuations of hospitals on those chronically sick or wounded is incalculable⁸⁰.

RETALIATION AND ETHNIC CLEANSING

Both Israel and Alexander agree on considering all the ‘military-age men’, in the words of the Israeli government spokesperson Eylon Levy⁸¹, as potential soldiers/militants. This is a very dangerous assumption because it potentially leads to outrages, such as mass executions –like those carried out by both Alexander and Israel⁸² or mass detentions –like those perpetrated by Israel⁸³–. The mass detention of about 150 Gazans, partially naked and blindfolded, is a good example of that. First presented as a massive surrendering Hamas militants⁸⁴, the evidence has shown that there were mostly non-fighting men, including a well-known journalist, and even ‘non-military-age men’, like teenagers and elders, were also detained⁸⁵. As of mid-April 2025, at least 400 children and 27 women are locked up in Israeli prisons, mostly without charges⁸⁶. The arbitrariness of the arrests is proven by the fact that up to 14,500 West Bank Palestinians have been detained (or rather kidnapped) by Israel since October 7th⁸⁷. Furthermore, Palestinian prisoners have

⁸⁰ <https://www.emro.who.int/opt/information-resources/emergency-situation-reports.html>; <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/papers/2024/IndirectDeathsGaza>; last access on 16/04/2025.

⁸¹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/hamas-condemns-israel-over-images-showing-semi-naked-palestinian-prisoners-2023-12-08/>; last access on 28/01/2024.

⁸² For example, besides the aforementioned execution-style killings of the fifteen health-care workers (see note 76), mass graves with tied-handed bodies plus evidence of having been buried alive and/or tortured have been discovered: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/04/1148876>; <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/4/25/signs-of-torture-as-nearly-400-bodies-found-at-gaza-hospitals-mass-graves>; last access on 16/04/2025. See also <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/un-human-rights-office-opt-unlawful-killings-gaza-city>; last access on 29/01/2024. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/1/20/palestinians-accuse-israeli-forces-of-executing-19-civilians-in-gaza>; last access on 29/01/2024.

⁸³ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67659296>; last access on 28/01/2024; <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/4/17/a-nation-behind-bars-why-has-israel-imprisoned-10000-palestinians>; last access on 18/04/2025.

⁸⁴ <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel-at-war/1701980659-over-150-hamas-terrorists-surrender-to-idf-forces-in-khan-yunis>; last access on 29/01/2024.

⁸⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/08/world/middleeast/israel-arrests-gaza-men-stripped.html>; last access on 29/01/2024.

⁸⁶ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/4/17/a-nation-behind-bars-why-has-israel-imprisoned-10000-palestinians>; last access on 18/04/2025.

⁸⁷ <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2024/1/10/threatened-with-rape-lama-khater>

recurrently suffered torture and mistreatment by Israeli soldiers⁸⁸. This, of course, constitutes another violation of international humanitarian laws, as established in the Geneva Conventions' Part III, Section I, Article 17⁸⁹. In a vicious historical parallelism, Zionists have also established several detention camps for Palestinians, where torture and abuse are the rule⁹⁰.

Alexander also punished the children and the women of Gaza by enslaving all of them. This is not exceptional for the Macedonian ruler and there are many other instances of selling children and women of defeated cities as slaves, like in Thebes and Tyre⁹¹. Lucky them: at least, they were alive. More than 17,000 children have been hitherto murdered by the IDF⁹². Approximately, 44% of the fatal casualties are children⁹³. Additionally, between 3,000 and 4,000 children have lost one or both legs⁹⁴. Finally, 60,000 cases

recalls-horrors-while-in-israeli-jails; last access on 29/01/2024; <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/2/26/israel-detains-dozens-of-palestinians-in-overnight-west-bank-raids>; last access on 18/04/2025.

⁸⁸ <https://socialbites.ca/latest-news/481758.html>; last access on 29/01/2024. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/11/israel-opt-horrifying-cases-of-torture-and-degrading-treatment-of-palestinian-detainees-amid-spike-in-arbitrary-arrests/>; last access on 29/01/2024. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/videos-israeli-soldiers-abuse-palestinian-detainees-rcna123214>; last access on 29/01/2024. <https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-live-updates-12-09-2023-e06fcf11a1e2fb864909418eab127116#>; last access on 29/01/2024; <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/08/israels-escalating-use-torture-against-palestinians-custody-preventable>; last access on 18/04/2025; <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cn7vje365rno>; last access on 18/04/2025; <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israeli-torture-urinating-palestinian-prisoners-burying-them-alive-and-beating-sick>; last access on 18/04/2025.

⁸⁹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/geneva-convention-relative-treatment-prisoners-war>; last access on 29/01/2024.

⁹⁰ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/8/6/israel-set-up-facilities-dedicated-to-torturing-palestinians-rights-group>; last access on 18/04/2025.

⁹¹ Thebes: Arr. *Anab.* I. 9. 9; Diod. Sic. XVII, 13.6; Plut. *Vit. Alex.* 11.12; Just. *Epit.* XI. 4.7-8; Polyb. V. 10.6; Ael. *VH* XIII. 7. Tyre: Arr. *Anab.* II. 24-4-5; Curt. IV. 4.14-18; Diod. Sic. XVII. 46.3-4; cf. Ducrey 1968: 166-169.

⁹² <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2025/3/26/gazas-stolen-childhood-the-thousands-of-children-israel-killed>; last access on 18/04/2025. Here are the names of the first 10,000 assassinated children by Israel: <https://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/2024/israel-war-on-gaza-10000-children-killed/>; last access on 02/02/2024.

⁹³ <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cn5wel11pgd0>; last access on 18/04/2025.

⁹⁴ <https://www.unicefusa.org/stories/unicef-delivers-wheelchairs-gazas-children>; last access on 18/04/2025; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2025/mar/27/gaza-palestine-children-injuries>; last access on 18/04/2025.

of acute child malnutrition have been hitherto reported⁹⁵. The number of children who have died because of preventable diseases, hypothermia, starvation, thirst, and other war-related circumstances is uncountable. They are not side victims: Israel is trying to annihilate the future of Palestine.

Women have been another group especially decimated by the Israeli attacks. Approximately 26% of the casualties are women. Two Gazan mothers are killed every hour⁹⁶. Miscarriages and premature births have been extensively reported since the beginning of the war, with a rate increase of 300%⁹⁷. In late 2024, over 48,000 pregnant women were experiencing food insecurity in Gaza. There were 16,500 cases of pregnant and breastfeeding women who suffered acute malnutrition⁹⁸. Women suffer from additional shortages, like intimate hygiene supplies, and are subject to gendered experiences and impacts⁹⁹. All these effects on the civilian population represent a further Zionist violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

After executing all the men in Gaza, Alexander saved an especially twisted and cruel fate for Betis, the Persian commander in the city. According to Curtius (iv. 6.25-29) and Hegesias (*FGrH* 142 F 5 *apud* Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 18.25-26), Alexander had him tied alive in a chariot, which dragged Betis around the city, tearing him apart. This is quite similar to Achilles' mistreatment of Hector's dead body (Hom. *Il.* xxii. 395-515)¹⁰⁰. However, this execution, despite its Homeric undertones (Maitland 2015: 5-7), was far from heroic and probably represents one of Alexander's most blatant displays of cruelty, along with the executions of Bessus, Ariamazes, or Musicanus¹⁰¹. Good enough, times have changed, and armies no longer drag

⁹⁵ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2025/01/28/five-babies-one-incubator/violations-pregnant-womens-rights-amid-israels-assault>; last access on 18/04/2025.

⁹⁶ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/press-release/2024/01/press-release-two-mothers-are-killed-in-gaza-every-hour-as-fighting-exceeds-100-days>; last access on 29/01/2024.

⁹⁷ <https://www.ippf.org/media-center/press-release-gaza-nine-months-pregnant-women-carry-burden-conflict>; last access on 18/04/2025.

⁹⁸ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2025/01/28/five-babies-one-incubator/violations-pregnant-womens-rights-amid-israels-assault>; last access on 18/04/2025.

⁹⁹ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2024/01/gender-alert-the-gendered-impact-of-the-crisis-in-gaza>; last access on 29/01/2024. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/feb/05/gaza-war-women-west-mothers-babies-medical?CMP=fb_cif; last access on 06/02/2024.

¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, according to some traditions, Hector was still alive when Achilles tied and started dragging him with his chariot (Atkinson 1980: 342); cf. Soph. *Aj.* 1029-1031.

¹⁰¹ On Bessus' death, see Mendoza 2023: 44-50. Ariamazes: Curt. vii. 11.28. Musicanus: Arr. *Anab.* vi. 17.2; Curt. ix. 8.16.

bodies (either dead or alive) with their vehicles, don't they?¹⁰² And, obviously, they do not run over the body of a victim with a chariot –or a tank nowadays– anymore¹⁰³.

Finally, since ancient Gaza was depopulated because all men had been killed and the women and children sold into slavery¹⁰⁴, Alexander settled in there people from the surrounding areas, and it became a Macedonian stronghold (Arr. *Anab.* II. 27.7). Therefore, there was a population replacement and Gaza was then occupied by new inhabitants from abroad. It rings a bell, doesn't it? Since the beginning of the Israeli attack, plans of colonising the Strip with Israeli settlers have been known¹⁰⁵. Perhaps the most shameless display of these colonisation plans so far was the celebration of a multitudinous conference in Jerusalem in late January 2024, which counted with the presence of 11 cabinet ministers and 15 coalition members of Knesset, some of them members of Netanyahu's party¹⁰⁶. As expressed above (see note 9), about half of Israelis would support the Zionist settlement of Gaza after the war. Obviously, these colonisation plans need a drastic decrease in the Palestinian population. It seems unlikely that the ongoing ethnic cleansing can erase from the Earth all the Gazan people, so Israel has been exploring different alternatives to get rid of them by expelling them to the nearby Sinai Peninsula (Egypt)¹⁰⁷ or by sending them to foreign countries, such as

¹⁰² <https://observers.france24.com/en/middle-east/20231101-video-of-a-dead-body-dragged-by-an-israeli-vehicle-shows-deplorable-conduct-says-idf>; last access on 24/01/2024; <https://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2024/09/05/732714/Israeli-forces-West-Bank-Majed-Fida-Abu-Zeina-Tubas>; last access on 18/04/2025.

¹⁰³ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/camera-footage-shows-israeli-vehicles-driving-over-palestinian-killed-army-raid-2024-01-10/>; last access on 24/01/2024; <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/israeli-tanks-have-deliberately-run-over-dozens-palestinian-civilians-alive-enar>; last access on 18/04/2025; <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6385/A-compound-crime-:Israeli-army-hits-Gaza-family,-uses-them-as-human-shields,-and-runs-over-their-mother>; last access on 18/04/2025.

¹⁰⁴ This is the possible reason Strabo (xvi. 2.30) wrongly asserted that Gaza was still depopulated even in his own time; cf. Bosworth 1980: 260.

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/return-to-gush-katif-determined-movement-emerges-to-resettle-israelis-in-gaza/>; last access on 01/02/2024; <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-expands-military-operation-gaza-defence-minister-says-2025-04-02/>; last access on 18/04/2025.

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/jan/29/israeli-ministers-attend-conference-calling-for-voluntary-migration-of-palestinians>; last access on 01/02/2024.

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/intelligence-ministry-concept-paper-proposes-transferring-gazans-to-egypt-sinai/>; last access on 01/02/2024; <https://www.jns.org/egypt-denies-report-its-willing-to-temporarily-relocate-500000-gazans-to-sinai/>; last access on 18/04/2025.

Congo or Saudi Arabia¹⁰⁸. Again, it should be remembered that more than 60% of Israelis back up the evacuation of the Palestinians out of their lands by any means necessary.

CONCLUSIONS – GENOCIDING GAZA

After assessing the evidence, it is time to check the list of practices that, among others, can constitute a case of genocide:

- a. Killing members of the group: Alexander mass massacred about 10,000 defenders during the two-month siege and the assault, according to the extant sources.
- b. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group: there is no indication of the conditions within Gaza during the siege, but they were surely far from comfortable, taking into consideration that the Macedonians recurrently bombarded the city walls –and eventually reached the inner city. Furthermore, the gruesome execution of Betis and the cold-blooded killing of, at least, 4,000 defenders in the final assault might be a good indication of the mean treatment faced by the Gazans.
- c. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part: What is a siege about, after all?
- d. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group: not recorded.
- e. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group: children and women were sold as slaves, so it can be counted as a forced transfer.

Additionally, after vacating Gaza, the place was repopulated by other people from the surrounding areas and became a Macedonian military stronghold. The harsh punishment of Gaza became proverbial and was still remembered centuries later, as shown by Strabo and Polybius. In consequence, were Alexander's acts «committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group»? The answer is a rotund yes. The inhabitants of Gaza were annihilated, enslaved, and

¹⁰⁸ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-in-talks-with-congo-and-other-countries-on-gaza-voluntary-migration-plan/>; last access on 01/02/2024. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/centrist-mk-says-call-on-european-countries-to-take-gaza-refugees-was-misunderstood/>; last access on 01/02/2024.

removed, and their land was handed over to other peoples. Thus, Alexander's actions in Gaza can be regarded as genocide according to our modern definition.

Alexander's crimes, nevertheless, pale in comparison with those perpetrated by Israel in the ongoing aggression in Gaza. Let's see that checklist again:

- a. Killing members of the group: the death toll has already surpassed the 50,000 direct casualties in the Strip –plus the unnumbered bodies that remain under the debris. After unilaterally breaking the ceasefire in mid-March 2025, Israel has murdered more than 1,560 further Gazans. It must be underlined, once more, that these figures do not include those dead by starvation, diseases, lack of medical aid, or other effects related to the actions of the IDF. These figures do not include either those killed in the West Bank.
- b. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group: if we strictly stick to those physically wounded, more than 116,000 Gazans have suffered injuries because of the Zionist attacks. The mental harm inflicted on the Palestinian population cannot be quantified, but it is not hard to imagine how more than 24 months (and how many more to come?) under constant airstrikes and shootings can affect them.
- c. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part: as stated in the paper, as part of its campaign, Israel cut off fuel and power supplies, and it has massively restricted access to food, water, and medical supplies and aid to the inhabitants of the Strip. These actions have entailed widespread famine among the Palestinians, turning starvation into a war weapon.
- d. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group: the impact of the war upon pregnant women and newborn babies is difficult to quantify, but miscarriages, premature births, and deaths during childbirth have dramatically risen due to the destruction of the Gazan health system and the restrictions on medical aid and supplies. Moreover, the lack of power has prompted the death of many premature babies because incubators could not work. Finally, malnutrition and thirst have affected both mothers and babies (either born or unborn).
- e. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group: as addressed above, there are known cases of Israeli soldiers abducting Palestinian babies and transferring them out of the Strip.

Is Israel carrying out a genocide in Gaza? The answer is an absolute yes. This conclusion has been equally reached by prestigious international organisations, such as Amnesty International and Human Right Watch¹⁰⁹, and the UN¹¹⁰. Moreover, the ICC has issued arrest warrants against Benjamin Netanyahu and Yoav Gallant for crimes against humanity. Finally, there is an ongoing case in the ICJ for genocide against Israel, brought by South Africa in late December 2023. On January 26th, 2024, the court accepted the plausibility of genocide crimes and ordered Israhell to take measures to prevent acts of genocide.

In conclusion, the comparison between both episodes shows that disregard for human lives has remained unchanged for millennia. The sets of actions undertaken by either Alexander or Israel are similar because they both aimed at the complete eradication of the population of Gaza. Therefore, these two events can be equally labelled as genocide. The main difference lies in the existence, nowadays, of international humanitarian laws, which the States are bound to respect. In Alexander's times, there was nothing alike and restrictions on violence were only established by some arbitrary religious laws or moral stances, which mostly applied to intra-Hellenic conflicts only. In consequence, they were easily neglected. There was no actual menace of retaliation for any commander who surpassed those unwritten 'laws'. Nevertheless, nowadays, there are international humanitarian laws, ratified by most of the countries of the world. Even though, as can be seen, some states like Israel violate them at will, international institutions like the ICJ can now judge and condemn them for acts of genocide. Unfortunately, they seem to be no real deterrent, and Palestine bleeds day after day. Iron Maiden's song, written in the context of the Balkan wars thirty years ago, is sadly as present as it was back then:

When you can see it happening
 The madness that's all around you
 Nobody seems to worry
 The world seems so powerless to act
 [...]
 Brutality and aggression

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/12/amnesty-international-concludes-israel-is-committing-genocide-against-palestinians-in-gaza/>; last access on 18/04/2025; <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/12/19/israels-crime-extermination-acts-genocide-gaza>; last access on 18/04/2025.

¹¹⁰ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/11/un-special-committee-finds-israels-warfare-methods-gaza-consistent-genocide>; last access on 18/04/2025.

Tomorrow, another lesson
Expecting another air raid
Praying for a ceasefire

As of October 2nd 2025, when the final proofs of this paper are being checked, the Palestinian death toll has surpassed 66,000 casualties. More than 168,000 Gazans have been injured as well. Yesterday, Zionist pirates assaulted part of the Global Sumud Flotilla in waters where they do not have jurisdiction, after having already carried out drone attacks against its vessels in international waters and foreign countries.

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