

**Committee: United Nations  
International Children's  
Emergency Fund (UNICEF )**

**Topic A: Violence against  
children in the Gaza Strip**

# Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip



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## Introduction

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is the main agency of the United Nations (UN) that safeguards children and adolescents' lives and defends their rights within 190 nations.

UNICEF was initially known as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund and was directly created by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on December 11th, 1946, to directly address the increasing emergency of food and healthcare to children and mothers as a consequence of World War II (UN, 2019). This was followed by the recommendation of the ECOSOC to create UNICEF based on Article 55 of the Charter of the United Nations, which states the following:

Firstly, the organization's main target is to benefit children and adolescents. Secondly, the organization further underlines the importance of respecting the international concept of sovereignty, mentioning that UNICEF shall not engage in any

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## Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip



activity in a country without the previous consultation and acceptance of the government concerned.

Some of the functions that the UN has given to UNICEF are child protection and inclusion (inclusive and safe environments), child survival (reducing child mortality and aiding vulnerable children), supporting equal education with quality, promoting social policies through initiatives, reducing child poverty; to reach every child in emergencies; to empower girls and ensure full and proper participation within their political systems; to innovate solutions to foster progress for children and adolescents; to deliver and assure the appropriate distribution of aid through logistical effort and providing lifesaving supplies; and to use data and evidence to generate research and make analysis regarding children's situation around the world (UNICEF, 2016).

As said before, UNICEF has international legitimacy in over 190 nations. However, it's important to highlight that inside the organization, there's an executive board composed of 36 nations that represent 5 UN Regional Groups. The board members are elected for three-year terms in the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

The United Nations Children's Fund cooperates with other organizations to improve its work as well as to minimize its setbacks; some UN Agencies with UNICEF

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## Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip



are the World Health Organization (WHO), Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

It's important to acknowledge that the UN Children's Fund has 55 intergovernmental, nongovernmental, academic, and financially recognized partnerships, 119 corporate partners, and national donors from over 32 countries.

FAO cooperates with UNICEF to fulfill children's nutrition needs, prevent malnutrition, and ensure food security; both organizations are part of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) and work together to release the annual report "State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World" (SOFI).

Similarly, the World Health Organization (WHO) is essential for UNICEF's proper work, aiding the organism in monitoring the state of children and adolescents regarding both physical and psychological health; as an example, on December 20th, 2023, both organizations released the psychological intervention Early Adolescent Skills for Emotions (EASE), and both are part of the Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates (JME) group.

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## Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip



On the other hand, UNFPA has worked with UNICEF to advocate for female children's rights through their Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) since 2008. Furthermore, UNDP, as well as UNESCO, have collaborated with the UN Children's Fund to monitor the educational status of children and adolescents around the world. In consequence, the UNDP has further maximized its support for UNICEF through the budget.

Lastly, the UNHCR helps the United Nations Children Fund with a specific collaboration framework that both organisms created in February 2023. This framework allows both entities to share a common vision regarding the host conditions in which children refugees have to live and promote the inclusion of displaced children and their families in national plans, budgets, datasets, and service delivery systems.

Recently, the current conflict in the Gaza Strip, Palestine, has lifted several concerns regarding the accomplishment of children's rights within the Palestinian territory. According to UNICEF & the Palestinian Health Minister (June 11, 2024), more than 14,000 children have passed away as a direct cause of Israel's intervention. Meanwhile, WHO (2024) estimates that since the events of October 7th, there were children from both sides have been taken as hostages, as well as the WHO Health

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## Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip



Emergencies Programme (WHE, 2024) declares that children's lives are threatened by rising malnutrition in the Gaza Strip.

To understand children's situation in Gaza, it's necessary to have a greater comprehension of the concept of violence as a whole. UNICEF's interpretation of violence comes directly from UNGA's resolution "A/RES/44/25", commonly known as the "Convention on the Rights of the Child" adopted on November 20th, 1989; in this convention, the concept of violence is defined in an article number 19 stating:

"If someone uses violence against a child or young person, it's never acceptable or justifiable. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social, and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child." (United Nations General Assembly, 1989).

Therefore, the UN Children Fund (2017) takes into consideration any kind of physical, sexual, emotional, physiological, spiritual, cultural, verbal, and financial abuse along with neglect as a form of violence. UNICEF's expert, Zara Sargsyan (2018), considers violence as a threat to children's physical, emotional, and social development

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## Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip



due to the consequences of their cognitive and sensory growth; personality and behavior changes, and their loss of empathy, in addition to the probability of creating a violence cycle for the next generation.

In addition, UNICEF et al. (2017) identify some contexts as more prone to generate violence toward children; some of them include 15 up to 19 years old girls in close relationships (sexual violence), geographical context (e.g., in Latin America & Caribbean, half of the murders of adolescents in the world occur despite just having less than 10% of the adolescent population), sex, age, ethnic group (e.g. non-Hispanic African-American 19 years old boy are 19 times more likely to be murdered in the USA), household economic, insecurity, triggering challenges in their education opportunities, social development, psychological behaviors.

UNICEF has worked with Palestine for many years, more specifically, with the area known as “The Gaza Strip”. The Gaza Strip was the name of a piece of the Palestinian territory consisting of 365 km<sup>2</sup> and inhabited by approximately 2.3 million people, having a population density of 5,500 people per km<sup>2</sup> (Al Jazeera and News Agencies, 2023).

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## Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip



The international jurisdiction of the Gaza Strip, belonging to the State of Palestine, commonly known as the “Historic Palestine”, was internationally officialized until the end of World War II and after the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) appealed to the support of the UN.

Thanks to this support, the UNGA declared Gaza “a district boundary” between both nations, the Beersheba-Gaza road was established as a boundary, and finally, it limits Israel to the Nabi Yunis in Gaza’s sub-district (United Nations General Assembly, 1947). Although international borders were established, conflicts between nations changed the limits.

Palestinian control over the Gaza Strip was again recognized by both the international community and Israel through the 1993 Oslo Accords in which the legitimacy of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA/PLO currently) was analyzed on the Gaza Strip, as well as the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the territory (Office of the Historian, n.d.).

Partial agreement was maintained since the Oslo Accords were signed in Washington D.C. in 1993, but several violations of the Oslo Accords caused instability within the region. First of all, on January 26th, 2006, legislative elections were held in

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## Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip



the Gaza Strip, having as a clear winner the Islamic Resistance Movement (known in Arabic as Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya, commonly known as Hamas) with 74 seats compared to the 45 of Fatah on the parliament (Segura. A, 2007).

At that time, Prime Minister of Israel Ehud Olmert called upon a meeting with his Defence Minister and his Foreign Minister to plan Israel's response, according to the same-day report from Al Jazeera. After that, in the Autumn of 2007, Israel declared what is known as the "Blockade of Gaza Strip" declaring Hamas as a hostile entity and approving unilateral sanctions (e.g. power cuts and border closure, among others) restricting the inhabitants of Gaza by ground, ocean, and air through wire fences that were built to control the flow along the entire border, riot police teams also controlled these areas (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, July 12. 2024).

This caused several effects on Palestinians' right to mobility; UNICEF (2022), "This land, sea and air blockade has significantly exacerbated previous restrictions, limiting the number and specified categories of people and goods allowed in and out through the Israeli-controlled crossings." (UNICEF, 2022).

Things continued in a precarious state thanks to Gaza's blockade being worsened by other interventions from Israel's military operations that happened in the 2010s. As

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## Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip



an example, there was an event that occurred on May 31st, 2010, in which Israeli forces forcibly boarded a flotilla of six ships managed by 700 pro-Palestinian militants from over 50 countries carrying 10,000 tonnes of humanitarian aid as a way to help citizens, as a consequence of Israel's intervention, nine people were murdered (ICRC, s.f.).

Later on, in 2014, another conflict began with a decision of Israel's government to a 50-day intervention within Gaza that lasted from July 8th to August 26th; as a result of this, 2,251 Palestinians passed away. These events motivated Hamas to take action on Israel's southern territory on October 7th, 2023. According to AJLabs (2024), at least 38,345 Palestinians have been taken away from their lives by July 11 at 13:10 GMT, including on this statistic a decrease of more than 15,000 children, and there are still 88,295 injured people and more than 10,000 missing.

Israel attributes Palestinian casualties to the claim that "Hamas uses civilians as a shield to protect itself," according to Hassan J. & Taylor A. (October 10, 2023). In response to the ongoing conflict, Israel has summoned 360,000 reservists. However, this move has triggered internal protests. The protests were mainly due to a controversial decision by Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition government that focused on social welfare and religious issues. Netanyahu, who has served as Israel's prime minister three times, has faced criticism for compelling the ultra-orthodox population to fight despite their

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## Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip



religious objections. This decision has intensified internal dissent and highlighted the broader tensions within Israeli society.

The conflict extends beyond Israel and Palestine, impacting Lebanon, particularly in the southern region where the Islamic Shiite military and political group Hezbollah operates. Hezbollah has a long and tense history with Israel, rooted in its staunch opposition to the state. This tension dates back to Israel's and Syria's invasion of Lebanon during the 1975-1990 civil war period. Currently, Hezbollah and Israel are exchanging threats of initiating conflict. Meanwhile, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) reported in July 2023 that, since October 7th, Lebanon has received between 200,000 and 250,000 Palestinian refugees, further straining the government's resources and ability to assist.

Hezbollah and Israel have a history of violent clashes, most notably during the July 2006 conflict. This confrontation began with a cross-border attack in which eight people were killed and two Israeli soldiers were kidnapped, leading to a 34-day war. The dispute was ultimately resolved through United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701, which called for an immediate cessation of hostilities. The resolution demanded that Hezbollah cease all attacks and that Israel halt all offensive military operations (UNSC, 2006).

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## Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip



Syria, on the other hand, has long allowed the entry of various pro-Palestinian militant groups into the region, providing necessary external armament to support Hamas in Gaza. As Ismail Haniyeh, Hamas' leader, stated to Al Jazeera journalist Andrew Waller on December 10, 2023, this support has been essential for Hamas' continued presence in the region. Syria's backing of Palestinians dates back to the 1948 conflict with Israel when Syria symbolically contributed a 3,000-strong faction to demonstrate its opposition to Israel's expansionist ambitions, particularly regarding the Golan Heights. Syria has consistently resisted reaching peace agreements with Israel, a dynamic that began with the Syrian uprising against its government, drawing many groups into the conflict (Slater, J., 2020).

In 1973, Syria further demonstrated its opposition to Israel by joining forces with Egypt in what is now known as the Yom Kippur War, which took place on October 6, 1973. The attack on Israel was launched simultaneously from both the Sinai Desert and the Golan Heights at 2:00 pm. This war was a direct consequence of the 1967 Israeli offensive during the June War, in which both Syria and Egypt lost significant territories. The 1973 war aimed to reclaim those lost lands, although both nations were ultimately overpowered by Israel (Doran, M., 2023).

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## Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip



Moreover, Syria has been a long-standing refuge for displaced Palestinians since the 1948 Nakba. This influx of refugees has resulted in ongoing challenges such as displacement, socio-economic hardships, lack of humanitarian aid, statelessness, limited job opportunities, and insecure infrastructure. According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA, 2024), Syria has received over 438,000 Palestinian refugees this year alone, adding to the country's already substantial refugee population.

Egypt has a similar historical ambiguity in the conflict, being the first Arab nation to recognize the State of Israel after the conflict Yom Kippur, Egypt's relation with both governments makes it essential, functioning as a mediator between them while also having an important control over Rafah's crossing; being vital to Palestinians subsistence, however, Egypt's government has been refusing the entry of Palestinian refugees, since it is against Hamas group; Hamas rivalry with Egypt originates from the fact that Cairo's government sees Hamas as an ally of the Muslim Brotherhood who opposed former President, Hosni Mubarak, and that caused the events of the Egyptian Arab Spring (The Soufan Center, 2023).

Other nations, such as Saudi Arabia, have indirectly supported Palestine, as seen with the recent USD 40 Million donation to the UNRWA (Le Monde & AFP, 2024). Still, they have also been getting close to Israel's government as seen in their

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## Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip



governmental worker's declarations, such as the one of the ambassador of Saudi Arabia to the UK gave on January 9th to BBC's reporter David Gritten (2024) mentioning that the kingdom was ready to normalize relations with Israel after the conflict in Gaza ends.

Oman, from its side, has given economic initiatives such as the increase of financing to the UNRWA, raising it to USD 3 Million on November 2023 and reiterating multiple times its diplomatic support for Palestinian rights and Palestinian State recognition as shown on their May 14th, 2024 speech at the UNGA; nevertheless, it's essential to acknowledge that, as Coates-Ulrichsen K. (2024) mentions, Oman has been a critical figure of mediation between Palestine and Israel as well as it has avoided an escalation of the conflict having conversations too with both the USA and Iran.

Iran has openly expressed its support for both Hamas and Hezbollah, a stance that intensified following an Israeli attack on Iran's embassy in Damascus, Syria. This led to a retaliatory strike by Iran on April 13, 2024, targeting Israel. However, these attacks were intercepted by Israel's Iron Dome defense system. In response, Israel warned Iran of a potential escalation if hostilities continued, turning this situation into both a diplomatic and military conflict between the two nations (Grajewski, N., 2024).

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## Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip

Additionally, factions in Yemen and Iraq have shown open support for the Palestinian cause, posing threats to U.S. interests in the region. In Yemen, the Houthis are a significant concern, as they jeopardize commercial shipping routes through the Gulf of Suez. Meanwhile, Iraqi forces present a threat to U.S. military personnel, with politicians like Hadi Al-Amiri issuing warnings such as, “If they intervene, we will intervene... we will consider all American targets legitimate” (Al-Amiri, H., 2023).

Overall, the quantity of victims from this conflict has been terrifying, being the most alarming conflict in the history of the nation. According to the organization “Save the Children” (2024), over 2% of Gaza’s child population has been either murdered or injured in the past six months; 60% of water infrastructure and sanitization was destroyed, 1 million children need either mental or psychological aid, 17,000 children are unaccompanied or were separated from their families and over 32% of Gaza’s children have experienced some type of violence as a result of the armed conflict.

**Figure 1. A third of people casualties in Israeli attacks on Gaza are children**

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## Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip



(Al Jazeera, 2023).

In the graph above, it is revealed that the most affected population were minors, according to OCHA's Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel – reported impact (2024); as of May 27th, 31% of children in Gaza suffer from food insecurity, famine, or malnutrition.

### Historical Background

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## Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip



Palestine was under the occupation of the Ottoman Empire for decades; however, after the military conflict of World War I, this occupation ended, which led the League of Nations to put Palestine under the mandate of Great Britain under its Mandates System. Initially, this mandate would be established only until Palestine acquired the status of an independent nation, but due to the evolution of the Mandate, the process did not proceed; in addition to this, the Mandate didn't take into account the wishes of Palestine to be an independent state; despite the requirements that the Covenant established, "the wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory" (UN, n.d.).

During this period, the British government issued the Balfour Declaration of 1917, committing to help establish a Jewish national home in Palestine, citing a historical connection to Jewish ancestors. However, the Palestinian people viewed this commitment as a violation of their human rights and the integrity of their country. In response, Palestinian Arabs resisted the British Mandate, leading to growing tensions with the Zionist movement. This escalating conflict became known as "the Palestine Problem."

To address the situation, the United Nations proposed a solution in 1947 to partition the territory into two independent states—one Palestinian Arab and the other

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## Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip



Jewish—with Jerusalem as an international city. However, this proposal failed to resolve the tensions. In 1948, the Jewish state declared independence as Israel, leading to military conflicts aimed at expanding its territory. These actions resulted in Israel controlling most of Palestine, reigniting the long-standing conflict in the Middle East.

By 1948, Britain started to have problems regarding its relations with the Arab States, and to prevent the problem from getting bigger, it decided to withdraw. In this same year, on May 14, the head of the Jewish organization, David Ben-Gurion, proclaimed the establishment of the state of Israel; this event would be the start of conflicts between Palestine and the Jewish state. The conflict intensified, and both parts attacked with armed forces; Palestine's principal objective was to defend and block the Partition Resolution to prevent the definitive establishment of the Jewish state.

After all this conflict with armed forces, Israel achieved part of its objective by having under its control most of the Palestine territory; in addition, after this event, the West Bank that became part of the British Mandate was captured by Jordan and annexed in 1950, meaning that Jordan's territory mainly was constituted of West Bank's area. Furthermore, Egypt also gained territory, and it was mostly part of Gaza due to an agreement between the states of Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Transjordan. On the other hand, the City Line divided the territory of Jerusalem between Israel and Jordan, which

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## Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip



lasted for 19 years until the armed conflict named Six-Day War, where Israel decided to reunite the city.

1967, one of the most memorable events took place, the so-called Six-Day War. During these six days, Israel achieved its most important and principal objective, to defeat three Arab armies and gain more territories, including the Gaza Strip, the East of Jerusalem, and the West Bank; meanwhile, due to this event, Palestinian refugees had to live in four different states, them being Gaza, Lebanon, West Bank, and Jordan.

Israel implemented a restriction for the Palestinian people, which meant that they couldn't leave the states where they were refugees to impose control and supervision over the population. This restriction limited the lifestyle of the population; there were strict schedules that allowed Israel to block main roads and villages, and as was expected, it didn't have a positive impact because it caused significant financial losses, a lack of efficient medical services, and studies, inadequate infrastructure and difficulties in the right of return. Finally, with this conflict, both parties agreed Israel would claim Jerusalem as its capital and Palestinians would claim East Jerusalem to transform it into a new state.

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## Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip



Years after the conflict, in September 1993, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) negotiator, signed the Oslo Accords. This agreement marked a significant step toward peace, as Israel recognized the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and the PLO agreed to stop armed groups from attacking Israel. Both sides also agreed that, over five years, the West Bank and Gaza Strip would gradually come under the control of Palestinian authorities to foster peace.

However, the Clinton Administration, which played a crucial role in overseeing the agreement, did not prioritize the enforcement of the Oslo Accords. As a result, the agreement failed to achieve its objective, and the conflict remained unresolved. In November 1995, Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by Yigal Amir, an opponent of the Oslo Accords. This tragic event led to the rise of new armed groups, particularly Hamas, an Islamist militant movement. By the 2000s, Hamas continued its conflict with Israel, further destabilizing the region.

Years later, in 2005, Israel finally withdrew its control from the Gaza Strip; this led the Hamas to have as an objective to win the elections to have authority over Gaza. Finally, in 2006, Hamas won the election, and shortly after, in 2007, Hamas seized control; its principal objective was to resist Israel and instead create an Islamic

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## Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip



Palestinian State. In that same year, the Israeli authorities intensified and organized a land, sea, and air blockade on Gaza with significant restrictions, like limiting the amount of people and goods allowed into the territory. For this and many more reasons, The United Nations (UN) considered Gaza as one of the most populated states, with a large percentage of the population living in poverty (58,4%), and with people who suffer from food insecurity (54%).

### **Current relevance**

In 2011, the Iron Dome was deployed in Israel; which is a network of radar detectors and missile launchers that have the objective of intercepting air attacks. Between November 14th and 21st, 2012, the Iron Dome was successfully used; Israel launched Operation Pillar of Defense in response to escalating rocket attacks from Gaza, aiming to weaken Hamas militants and their rocket-launching capabilities. This operation, which included airstrikes and targeted assassinations of crucial Hamas figures like Ahmad Jabari, sought to reduce the immediate threat to Israeli civilians. The conflict, however, had severe consequences, including significant civilian casualties and widespread destruction in Gaza. The global response was divided, with some nations supporting Israel's right to defend itself while others criticized the civilian impact.

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## Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip



Ultimately, the event intensified the Israel-Palestine conflict and drew international diplomatic efforts to secure a ceasefire.

In 2014, the abduction and murder of three Israeli teenagers triggered a significant escalation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Israel launched a military operation in the West Bank to arrest suspects and dismantle Hamas infrastructure, accusing the militant group of orchestrating the killings. This led to increased tensions, including the launch of Operation Protective Edge, a military campaign in Gaza aimed at stopping rocket fire from Hamas, resulting in widespread casualties and destruction, which led to a seven-week armed conflict.

Later, on March 30th, 2018, Palestinians began mass protests near the Israeli border in the Gaza Strip, known as the Great March of Return. These demonstrations were driven by Palestinians' demands for the right to return to lands they were displaced from during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and to protest the Israeli blockade of Gaza. The protests led to significant casualties, with over 170 Palestinians killed and thousands injured as Israeli forces responded with live fire to the protests, citing security concerns.

Wanting to stabilize the situation, the Abraham Accord, signed on September 15, 2020, between Israel, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Bahrain, established formal

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## Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip



diplomatic relations and cooperation in areas like trade and technology. This agreement marked a significant shift in Middle Eastern diplomacy by normalizing relations between Israel and these Arab nations, emphasizing peace and dialogue.

The accord's effects include opening embassies, direct flights, and increased economic collaboration. It has also influenced discussions on potential further normalization between Israel and other Arab states, though it has faced criticism from some Palestinian leaders and regional rivals.

However, this accord didn't end hostilities since, on October 7, 2023, Hamas, a militant group backed by Iran and controlling Gaza, launched a surprise attack on Israel. The terrorists intended to inflict significant damage, create widespread fear, and undermine Israeli security. The attack aimed to provoke a severe response from Israel, exacerbate regional tensions, and rally support among their allies and sympathizers.

In response to the attack, Israel imposed a total blockade on Gaza on October 8, 2023. This blockade severely restricted the flow of resources, materials, and people into and out of the territory. Essential supplies such as food, medicine, and fuel became scarce, leading to shortages and a humanitarian crisis. The blockade also halted economic activities, further straining Gaza's already fragile infrastructure.

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## Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip



The consequences of these effects were dire. The scarcity of resources led to deteriorating living conditions, with widespread shortages of necessities and medical supplies. The blockade exacerbated the humanitarian situation, causing significant distress among the population.

After more than 300 days of ongoing conflict in Palestine, over 15,000 child casualties have been reported. Ground incursions and heavy fighting continue, with 86% of Gaza's areas forcibly evacuated. This has led to repeated attacks on designated humanitarian “safe zones,” severely restricting the delivery of much-needed aid. On May 12, 2024, the United Nations condemned the ongoing, systematic violence against Palestinians in Gaza, where the majority of victims over the past nine months have been women and children (OHCHR, 2024).

Many Palestinian children remain trapped, detained, displaced, or separated from their families amid the chaos, according to Save the Children. The latest offensive in Rafah has further worsened the situation, increasing the number of children separated from their families and placing additional pressure on already strained communities and caregivers. Some children have gone missing amid the conflict. The humanitarian crisis has also taken a heavy toll on essential services. In 2023, hostilities in Gaza led to the

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## Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip



closure of 23 hospitals and 56 healthcare centers, as well as damage to 370 educational facilities, according to the Secretary-General's Protection of Civilians (PoC) report.

The matter of Palestine isn't something that exclusively affects Middle Eastern people. Still, humanity as a whole, Mier. A. & T. (2024) identify the ongoing Palestinian situation as a threat to the stability within the European-Middle Eastern region due to the other conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Both authors agree on the statement that claims that the importance of the area for different stakeholders is purely geopolitics; Palestine is a region that has a great variety of natural resources and what is considered a strategic geographical position near the Mediterranean and the Sinai Peninsula that allows both countries to enforce power in their neighbors.

### **International actions**

International organizations play an essential role in addressing violence against children in the Gaza Strip; however, they face numerous difficulties in the protection of children in Gaza. The movement of personnel and supplies is restricted by the ongoing blockade that complicates aid delivery. Additionally, political complexities and security concerns often limit the scale and scope of intervention programs. They are compelled to

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## Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip



operate within a highly unpredictable environment, where they have to strike a balance between providing emergency relief and working towards long-term goals.

Since Gaza has always been a battlefield and a center of human tragedy with its vulnerable residents, including children, the conflict has also been addressed by other international governmental and non-governmental organizations such as Save the Children, an international non-governmental organization (NGO), has been at the forefront of efforts to protect children in Gaza from violence. The organization's multi-faceted approach includes emergency response, long-term education projects, and advocacy work. During heightened conflict, Save the Children provides immediate relief by distributing food, water, and medical supplies. Additionally, they offer psychosocial support to help children cope with the trauma of living in a conflict zone. (Save the Children, 2024)

Similarly, the European Union (EU), a leading intergovernmental organization, has actively assisted children in the Gaza Strip, such as life-saving assistance and basic needs services like food, shelter, and healthcare. It has also supported the three-phase roadmap to an enduring ceasefire and release of hostages; a withdrawal of Israeli forces from all populated areas of Gaza; a release of several hostages, including women, the elderly, the wounded, and the children, in exchange for the release of hundreds of

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## Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip



Palestinian prisoners. Additionally, the E.U has implemented 41 air bridge flights to deliver over 1,800 tonnes of aid to Palestinians through Egypt. (European Union External Action, 2024).

The Gaza Contact Group was also formed by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) members to address the ongoing conflict and humanitarian crisis in Gaza. This group discusses and implements steps to enhance international recognition of the sovereign State of Palestine. One of its primary objectives is to increase diplomatic and political pressure on Israel and its supporters, advocating for actions and policies that support Palestinian statehood and address grievances related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Through this collective effort, the Gaza Contact Group seeks to galvanize international support and influence the global community's stance on the Palestinian issue.

### **UN actions**

The United Nations (UN) has been deeply involved in efforts to stop the violence against children in the Gaza Strip, implementing a wide range of programs and initiatives through its various agencies. These efforts aim to address children's immediate and long-term needs affected by the ongoing conflict and humanitarian crisis.

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## Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip



UNICEF has provided emergency relief during times of conflict, including distributing essential supplies such as chlorine tablets for water purification water containers by employing water trucking to shelters, fuel to operate water wells, desalination plants, trucking bars of soap, and family hygiene kits. Furthermore, emergency medical supplies are delivered to hospitals and health facilities, supplies for newborns, kits for midwives, kits to treat acute watery diarrhea, and other life-saving medicines.

The nutrition supplies sector provides high-energy biscuits and micronutrient supplementation for children under the age of 5, amongst other essentials. They also set up Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS) to offer safe havens where children can play, learn, and receive psychosocial support away from the violence. (UNICEF, 2024).

Moreover, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has implemented many measures to reduce the adverse effects of violence on children. [+++]UNRWA has several schools in Gaza that offer a safe environment and psychosocial support, including legal assistance related to child protection and addressing issues of child abuse or neglect [+++] (UNRWA, n.f.).

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## Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip

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Lastly, the UNSC is calling for an immediate and long-lasting humanitarian ceasefire, which involves the immediate, safe, and unconditional release of all abducted children and any grave violations against all children, including casualties and maiming of children.



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# Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip



## Points to Discuss

### 1. Context

- a. Addressing the causes of the Six-Day Armed conflict
  - i. Addressing the recognition of the state of each of the parts involved in the conflict
    - 1. Failure of negotiations
- b. Addressing the blockade and its effects
  - i. Food insecurity
  - ii. Lack of water due to
    - 1. Lack of fuels
  - iii. Risks in the health sector
- c. Addressing the origin of Hamas
  - i. Addressing the objective of Hamas
  - ii. Addressing the objectivity of the other countries

### 2. Development

- a. Ensuring access to basic services for the victims

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## Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip



- i. Fighting against the blockade
- b. Facing the causes of the armed conflict at an international level
  - i. Addressing International mediation
  - ii. Reinforcing economic development
- c. Ensuring a state without terrorist groups
  - i. Strengthening security reforms
  - ii. Involving community leaders and local organizations in identifying and addressing the root causes of radicalization.
    - 1. Minimizing the impact on civilians, especially children.
- d. Addressing the remaining consequences of armed conflicts that occurred before.
  - i. Providing comprehensive mental health services to children affected by past conflicts
  - ii. Establishing rehabilitation programs for children who have been physically injured or disabled due to the conflicts.
  - iii. Ensuring that children can continue their education despite the disruptions caused by past conflicts.

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## Topic A: Violence against children in the Gaza Strip



- e. Address the consequences of the war.
  - i. Ensuring that children have uninterrupted access to healthcare services, including vaccinations, nutrition programs, and emergency medical care
  - ii. Strengthening legal frameworks to protect children from exploitation, recruitment by armed groups, and abuse.
    - 1. Ratifying and enforcing international conventions on the rights of the child.
  - iii. Offering socio-economic assistance to families affected by the war to alleviate poverty and improve living conditions.
  - iv. Implementing community-based programs that build resilience among children
    - 1. Coping with ongoing stress and instability

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