

Is Israel Guilty of Genocide Against the Palestinians?

An Analysis of a High School “Genocide” Activity

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Across the United States, many states require instruction on genocide, with the expectation that these lessons present accurate, balanced, and objective analysis. In practice, however, particularly since the October 7, 2023 Hamas terrorist attacks, some instructional materials have introduced highly contested claims, [including allegations that Israel is committing genocide](#).

For example, one high school-level lesson reviewed by CAMERA includes an activity titled, “Is Israel Guilty of Genocide Against the Palestinians?” Students are asked to analyze the Israel–Hamas war and write an essay arguing whether it constitutes genocide. The activity provides three sources: one from the Israeli Foreign Ministry defending against the charge, one from the Council on Foreign Relations offering a general overview, and a third, a “fact sheet” from the Institute for Middle East Understanding (IMEU), that supports the accusation. IMEU is an advocacy organization that promotes Palestinian perspectives in American public discourse.

The IMEU “fact sheet” contains significant inaccuracies and omissions. It makes three categories of accusations against Israel: that Israel

deliberately kills civilians, that Israel deliberately deprives Palestinians of basic necessities, and that Israeli leaders have expressed genocidal intent. Were these accusations true it would satisfy the legal definition of genocide under international law. The evidence the IMEU uses is often incomplete, disputed, or drawn from sources whose credibility and expertise are contested raising serious concerns about whether, under the guise of presenting multiple perspectives, students are being led to treat competing viewpoints as substitutes for verified facts and evidence.

Targeting of Civilians

One of the most egregious examples of false claims include citing the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) claim that the vast majority of casualties in the war are civilians. However, as [CAMERA](#) has documented, OCHA is not a reliable source on civilian casualties as it insists that every Palestinian killed is a casualty, even those whose Hamas or Palestinian Islamic Jihad affiliation is clear. It also cites the organization Save the Children saying that Israel has killed 20,000 children in Gaza, the source for which is the Hamas-controlled Gaza Ministry of Health.



- Since October 2023, the Israeli military is **confirmed to have killed at least 66,148** [Palestinians](#) in Gaza (as of October 1, 2025), the **vast majority civilians**. This only includes people who hospitals have identified and officially confirmed to have been killed. At least ten thousand others are missing under the rubble and presumed dead.
- The Israeli military has **killed at least 20,000 children** [— about 2% of all the children in Gaza](#) — including at least **953 babies** [under one year of age](#). That's an average of at least one child killed every hour since October 2023.

They also repeat accusations that Israel targeted civilians who sought aid at distribution centers established by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation. However, there is no evidence to support this accusation, and it is unknown who killed civilians on the way to the distribution sites, though it was likely Hamas.

- Israeli soldiers have **repeatedly massacred** [starving Palestinian civilians](#) trying to get food aid (at least **2,000** [as of September 2025](#)), as well as **first responders** [, aid workers](#) [, journalists](#) [, and people carrying white flags](#) [.](#)

Another distortion the Institute makes is accusing Israel of ethnic cleansing. In fact, Israel tells Gazans to leave so that they will not be caught in the crossfire between the IDF and Hamas, which uses them as human shields, not to ethnically cleanse them.

- The Israeli military has **ethnically cleansed more than 90%** [of the population](#) of Gaza, about **2 million people**, from their homes. As **noted** [by Human Rights Watch](#) in November 2024:

"the Israeli government's acts of forced displacement are widespread and systematic. Statements by senior officials with command responsibility show that forced displacement is intentional and forms part of Israeli state policy and therefore amount to a crime against humanity. Israel's actions appear to also meet the definition of ethnic cleansing."

Deprivation of Necessities

Another claim is that Israel is deliberately preventing aid from entering Gaza to starve Gazans to death. However, Israel has facilitated [millions of tons of aid](#) into the Gaza Strip since the war began. [According to U.S. Central Command](#), which is currently coordinating aid, at least 4,200 truckloads of aid have been entering Gaza every week.

- Starting in October 2023, Israel started blocking the entry of sufficient supplies of **food, electricity, and fuel, while systematically destroying** [Gaza's food infrastructure](#), including bombing bakeries, factories, farms, and agricultural land, **deliberately engineering** [widespread hunger and malnutrition](#). In March 2025, Israel **tightened its siege even further**, imposing a near total blockade.

They also accuse Israel of targeting hospitals and other medical facilities while omitting that Hamas operates out of said facilities and some Gazan medical workers are themselves Hamas members, including [the director of the Kamal Adwan Hospital](#).

- The Israeli military has **systematically targeted** [Gaza's health care system and workers](#), **repeatedly attacking and invading hospitals** [, which is a war crime](#) [, and cutting off their supplies](#) [of basic medicines, equipment, and fuel](#).

Genocidal Intent

The Institute for Middle East Understanding also cites various statements by Israeli politicians and generals that they claim show genocidal intent. However, they are either taking these quotes out of context or deliberately misconstruing them to reach the conclusion they want. For example, they cite then Defense Minister Yoav Gallant on October 10, 2023, saying, "Gaza won't return to what it was before. There will be no Hamas. We will eliminate everything. If it doesn't take one day, it will take a week. It will take weeks or even months, we will reach all places." Except Gallant is clearly talking about Hamas when he says, "we will eliminate everything."

- On October 9, 2023, as Israel's assault on Gaza began, **Defense Minister Yoav Gallant declared** [: "We are imposing a complete siege on \[Gaza\]. No electricity, no food, no water, no fuel— everything is closed. We are fighting human animals and we act accordingly."](#)

They also use Prime Minister Netanyahu citing the biblical passage about the Amalek as evidence of intent, even though this passage is today commonly used in the context of bringing evildoers to justice, and even the Hague features the passage on its façade.



- During a televised national address as Israel's ground invasion of Gaza began in November 2023, **Prime Minister Netanyahu invoked a genocidal passage** [from the Bible calling for the extermination of the Amalek people down to the last man, woman, child, and baby](#), telling Israeli soldiers:

*"You must **remember what Amalek has done to you**, says our Holy Bible. And **we do remember.**"*

- **Netanyahu** invoked the story of the Amalekites [again in a letter](#) [to soldiers preparing to invade Gaza](#).

Finally, the Institute for Middle East Understanding cites various organizations such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and Doctors Without Borders accusing Israel of genocide. However, these groups are not legal authorities to determine whether or not something is a genocide. Moreover, the Amnesty International report they cite has been [criticized](#) by experts, such as Elliot Malin, of Scholars for Truth About Genocide for improperly widening the definition of genocide.

- **Amnesty International**, [Human Rights Watch](#) [and Doctors Without Borders](#) [have all released reports concluding that Israel is guilty of genocide in Gaza](#). [Amnesty's](#) [report](#), released in December 2024, found:

"sufficient basis to conclude that Israel committed, during the nine-month period under review, prohibited acts under Articles II (a), (b) and (c) of the Genocide Convention, namely killing, causing serious bodily or mental harm and deliberately inflicting on Palestinians in Gaza conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction in whole or in part. The organization has also found sufficient basis to conclude that these acts were committed with the specific intent to destroy Palestinians in Gaza."

In addition IMEU cites a resolution by the International Association of Genocide Scholars which accuses Israel of genocide even though the resolution was widely [criticized](#) by hundreds of experts for "failing to accurately apply the law and facts on the war in Gaza," and for a flawed process for passing the resolution in which dissenting voices were ignored.

- **The International Association of Genocide Scholars** [\(IAGS\)](#). In September 2025, the IAGS, the oldest and largest organization of genocide scholars, voted overwhelmingly in favor of a resolution [declaring](#) ["Israel's policies and actions in Gaza meet the legal definition of genocide."](#)

IMEU also misrepresents the International Court of Justice's preliminary ruling as saying that it plausible that Israel is violating the Genocide

Convention. In reality the court ruled that "Palestinians have a plausible right to be protected from genocide," as ICJ president Joan Donoghue [explained](#) to the BBC, not that it was plausible that Israel was committing the crime.

The International Court of Justice

- In a case brought by **South Africa**, the world's highest court, the **International Court of Justice**, [ruled](#) [that it's plausible Israel is guilty of violating the Genocide Convention](#) [in Gaza and continues to investigate](#).

While it is understandable for schools to want to include an opposing viewpoint for an activity, using one that advances blatant falsehoods is wrong and does nothing to educate students about genocide or the Israel-Hamas War.