

Israeli War Crimes

BRIEFING CARD

- **1948:** During the Nakba, 75% of the Palestinian population were forced to leave their homes to make way for the state of Israel. Over 530 Palestinian villages were ethnically cleansed and more than 70 massacres were carried out.
- **1956:** The UN condemned Israel for attacking Syria in ‘flagrant violation’ of the agreed ceasefire.
- **1962:** The UN said ‘the Israel attack [on Syria] of 16-17 March 1962 constitutes a flagrant violation’ (of UN Resolution 111) and Israel must ‘refrain from such action in the future’.
- **1966:** Israel was again condemned by the UN for attacking its neighbours. In Resolution 228 the UN ‘censured’ Israel for its military action ‘in violation of the United Nations charter’.
- **1982:** During the Israeli attack on Lebanon, Israeli-supported militias of the Lebanese Forces entered the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila and massacred up to 3,500 individuals, mostly Palestinians. Ariel Sharon was found indirectly responsible for the war crime of genocide. Sharon was later elected Prime Minister from 2001 until 2006.
- **1996:** Israel’s occupation of southern Lebanon continued with ongoing ill-treatment and murder of Lebanese civilians under occupation. In 1996 over 100 men, women and children were deliberately killed by Israel when taking shelter at a UN compound in Qana. Israel’s occupation of southern Lebanon continued until 2000.
- **2006:** Israel dropped white phosphorous on civilians in Gaza. The international community has condemned Israel’s use of white phosphorous as a war crime.

- A war crime is a **violation of one of the laws of war** (also known as international humanitarian law). These laws were introduced after the atrocities of World War Two.
- War crimes include the deliberate and unprovoked destruction of communities, devastation beyond military necessity and the ill-treatment, torture or murder of civilians living under occupation.
- War crimes are among the **gravest crimes** in international law. They are so serious that there is no time limit for prosecuting the perpetrators.
- Israel has a **long history of war crimes**, from the ethnic cleansing in 1948 to its present-day devastation beyond military necessity in Gaza.
- Since 1948 the United Nations have condemned Israel’s war crimes, but Israel continues to act with impunity.

- **2021:** The International Criminal Court announced that it has jurisdiction in Palestine, clearing its chief prosecutor to investigate alleged Israeli war crimes.



A Palestinian woman suffering from white phosphorous burns [B’tselem]



2000: Moments before 12 year old Muhammad al- Durrrah was shot dead by Israeli forces in Gaza

■ **Dec 2008- Jan 2009:** Over 1000 Palestinians were killed in the Gaza Massacre. 55% of whom were not involved in the fighting. Israel was also condemned for using Palestinian women and children as human shields.

■ **May 2010:** Israel attacked the Gaza Freedom Flotilla, a group of six ships carrying aid to Gaza. Israel killed 9 peace activists.

■ **November 2012:** Israeli attack on Gaza killed 167 Palestinians. 2 Israelis were killed.

■ **Jul - Aug 2014:** Israel launched a 7-week bombardment of Gaza. This left 1000 Palestinian children permanently disabled.

■ **2018 - 2019:** Israeli forces unlawfully fired live ammunition at Palestinians who posed no imminent threat to life at the Great March of Return protests. This was at the Wall built by Israel to besiege the people of Gaza.

■ **May 2021:** Israel's attack on Gaza killed 256 Palestinians, including 60 children. On 16 May Israel targeted two residential buildings of the Abu al-Ouf and al-Kolaq families, killing 30 family members including 11 children. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch called for an investigation into Israel's continuing war crimes in Gaza.

1165+ Palestinian children killed by Israeli forces in Gaza since 2006

War crimes in the occupied West Bank

Israel has illegally occupied the West Bank since 1967. Under international humanitarian law, Israel is **obliged not to mistreat, torture or murder** Palestinians under occupation.

■ Israel mistreats Palestinians daily through collective punishment such as checkpoints, home demolitions, curfews and military incursions.

■ Palestinian prisoners are subjected to physical beatings and degrading treatment in Israeli prisons. Prisoners report being stripped of their clothes, hanged from the ceiling and beaten. Female prisoners report sexual abuse.

■ Israel repeatedly targets and kills Palestinian men, women and children. Israel killed 36 Palestinian children in the West Bank in 2022, making it the deadliest year for children in the West Bank since 2006.

References:

- 1) 'Nakba Day: What Happened in Palestine in 1948?' Al-Jazeera, May 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/15/nakba-mapping-palestinian-villages-destroyed-by-israel-in-1948>
- 2) Amnesty International's report on Israeli apartheid: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2022/02/israels-system-of-apartheid/#:~:text=This%20is%20apartheid,order%20to%20benefit%20Jewish%20Israelis>
- 3) Human Rights Watch report on Israeli apartheid: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>

Information accurate (April 2023)



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