



Mass Graves in Gaza Strip

**World's 1st Genocide Broadcast Live
Amid International Silence**

June 2024



Introduction:

This report addresses the discovery of mass graves in the Gaza Strip, highlighting the alleged genocides perpetrated by the Israeli occupation army since October 7, 2023 .

The term "mass graves" here refers to sites where civilians have been compelled to bury the deceased due to ongoing violence, as well as cemeteries purportedly created by the occupation forces to conceal their crimes.

The report details the uncovering of these graves, providing statistics on the number of sites and bodies recovered. It presents evidence suggesting the involvement of the occupation army in field executions and mass assassinations of civilians, practices that potentially constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. The report concludes with a series of findings and recommendations based on the collected data and the implications of these mass graves.



The existence of mass graves is strong evidence that the Israeli occupation army has committed war crimes against Palestinian citizens in the Gaza Strip. These graves signify blatant violations of human rights, with their creation reflecting the chaotic and violent circumstances during the ground invasion.

The emergence of mass graves coincided with the ground invasion of Gaza, which has obstructed civilians from accessing public cemeteries. Burials began in the courtyard of the Shifa Medical Complex in Gaza City. As the occupation forces expanded their ground operations, affecting most neighborhoods in Gaza and its northern regions, the number of these impromptu cemeteries has grown. Some of these sites have been intentionally established by the occupation army to obscure their crimes.¹



The phenomenon of mass graves has dramatically expanded in the Gaza Strip, forcing civilians to bury the deceased in mass or individual graves in public squares, along street edges, market squares, and near destroyed homes. The pressure of the ongoing military operations has left civilians with no alternative but to bury their dead wherever possible, leading to the proliferation of dozens of such graves.

¹ <https://un.dk/mass-graves-in-gaza-show-victims-hands-were-tied-says-un-rights-office/>

Mass graves created by the occupation forces began to emerge with the ground invasion of the Gaza Strip on October 27, 2023. The Israeli army has reportedly committed field executions, particularly targeting young men under the suspicion of being resistance fighters. In reality, these individuals have often been civilians with no ties to military activities. One of the first notable sites of such mass graves was established near Kamal Adwan Hospital in the northern Gaza Strip.²

The Gaza Civil Defense has documented numerous instances of these crimes against humanity. Evidence has been collected from various locations, including the Nasser Medical Complex and its surroundings, indicating that the occupation forces have conducted assassinations and buried bodies randomly to conceal their actions.

The Civil Defense also confirmed that field executions have been rampant, particularly targeting young men under unfounded accusations of involvement in resistance activities.

The withdrawal of occupation forces from key medical complexes, such as the Al-Shifa Medical Complex in Gaza City and the Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Younis, has led to the discovery of these graves. Citizens searching for missing relatives in these areas have uncovered the extent of the mass burials. The Palestinian Civil Defense has reported receiving thousands of distress calls since the beginning of December 2023, further highlighting the scale of the humanitarian crisis.



Mass graves are not confined to these documented sites. It is believed that numerous graves remain undiscovered due to the occupation's control over various regions. These areas include Beit Hanoun, Beit Lahia, and East Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip, as well as East Shujaiya Cemetery, Kamal Adwan Hospital, and additional sites in the southern Gaza Strip like the Nasser Complex and East Khan Younis.

² <https://liberties.aljazeera.com/en/gaza-mass-graves/>

These sites represent forensic evidence for genocides and massacres committed by the Israeli military, already accused of genocide at the International Court of Justice (ICJ).



The circumstances and statistics surrounding the establishment of mass graves highlight the occupation's attempts to “bury” its crimes. These mass graves are not only indicative of random burials but also include instances where the occupation forces bulldozed 60 cemeteries and took over 1,000 bodies. Such actions constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and enforced disappearances.

As of May 11, 2024, seven makeshift burial sites have been uncovered in hospitals: three at the Al-Shifa Medical Complex in Gaza City, three at the Al-Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Younis, and one at Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahia. From these graves, a total of 520 bodies have been recovered.³

These figures only account for bodies recovered from hospital graves. At least 17 mass graves have been uncovered across different areas of the Gaza Strip, with seven located within hospitals. These graves have often been established following field executions, which have targeted the sick, wounded, displaced individuals, and medical personnel.

Recent data about the discovered graves indicate the following:

- Kamal Adwan Hospital: One mass grave with 46 bodies recovered
- Al-Nasser Medical Complex: Three mass graves, with 392 bodies recovered from just one of these graves
- Al-Shifa Medical Complex: Three mass graves with 82 bodies recovered
- Additionally, two cemeteries in the Nasser Medical Complex remain unopened

³ <https://www.thenationalnews.com/news/mena/2024/05/09/dozens-of-bodies-found-in-third-mass-grave-at-gazas-al-shifa-hospital/>

Many cases may not be reflected in official statistics, as families often take it upon themselves to retrieve and bury their relatives in public cemeteries. The inability to open some graves is primarily due to ongoing attacks by the occupation army, which have decimated 80% of civil defense and rescue capabilities, including a severe lack of fuel

The following table provides data on mass graves, attacks on corpses, and the number of recovered bodies:

Remarks	Statistics	Cases
Organ theft reported	60	Bulldozed cemeteries
80 bodies returned with signs of mutilation	Over 1,000	Stolen bodies
In cities and hospitals	17	Discovered mass graves
Only 3 have been opened	7	Mass graves inside hospitals
Hard to reach due to relentless bombardment and rescue difficulties	4	Unopened cemeteries
The exact number is much higher; Many bodies could not be retrieved	520	Retrieved bodies
Only 42% of body parts identified	165	Partially identified bodies
58% body parts unidentified	227	Unidentified bodies



3. Evidence of Crimes Committed by the Occupation Army

Evidence of the occupation army's crimes related to mass burials can be divided into two main categories: Evidence concerning the burial methods and evidence visible on the bodies themselves.

Evidence Related to Burial Methods:

The unconventional burial methods observed in these mass graves provide significant evidence of the crimes committed. Unlike traditional burial practices passed down through generations in Gaza, these graves are found to have bodies buried at depths exceeding three meters, with



bodies stacked atop one another. Many bodies are rewrapped in new, black and blue plastic shrouds, contrasting sharply with the customary shrouds used in the region. This unusual wrapping increase the internal temperature, accelerating decomposition and thus hastening the disappearance of crucial forensic evidence.

Evidence on the Bodies:

The bodies recovered from these graves display clear signs of torture and execution. Numerous bodies have had their hands and feet shackled, some showed bullet wounds, including gunshots to the head, while others have been decapitated. Disturbingly, there have been instances of bodies buried alive, evidenced by signs such as a body in hospital operating room suit. One particularly harrowing case involved a girl with amputated limbs, also in surgery attire, suggesting she might have been buried alive.⁴

Moreover, several bodies exhibit signs of abdominal tampering. These bodies have their stomachs opened and then re-stitched in a manner inconsistent with standard medical practices in Gaza hospitals, raising suspicions of organ theft. The random and disrespectful reburial of these bodies further underscores the grave violations of human dignity involved.

Additional documented evidence includes the theft of skin from some corpses and other indications of unnatural mutilation and decomposition. Such findings necessitate an international criminal investigation. Concerns are heightened by the alarming number of missing persons, which has surpassed 10,000. It is feared that many of these individuals have been executed, their bodies mutilated, and then buried in mass graves.⁵

⁴ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/04/1148876>

⁵ <https://www.ichr.ps/en/category-1/9883.html>



4. Political and Humanitarian Consequences

International reactions have strongly emphasized the necessity of investigating the mass graves discovered in the Gaza Strip. The United Nations has issued warnings, implicating the occupation army in the assassinations and random burials. However, beyond these warnings, there have been no concrete measures proposed to end the occupation's crimes or hold those responsible accountable if the allegations are confirmed.⁶

At the local level, the Independent Commission for Human Rights in Palestine has reached out to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial executions. They highlighted ongoing genocidal operations, including field executions and the creation of mass graves, and called for an investigation into these crimes. They estimate that nearly 2,000 people may have been buried secretly to conceal these atrocities.⁷

The impact on civilians has been profound, causing deep psychological trauma that requires advanced treatment. The widespread occurrence of field executions, often witnessed by family members, including children and women, has led to severe social and psychological distress. The sight of families retrieving the bodies of their loved ones has resulted in numerous instances of psychological collapse, a harrowing experience affecting the entire Gazan community.

⁶ <https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15692.doc.htm>

⁷ <https://www.ichr.ps/en/category-1/9883.html>

.5 Findings and Recommendations

The uncovering of mass graves in Gaza has drawn attention to the broader context of the conflict, where international laws and norms are being tested. These graves are not just a result of immediate wartime necessities but also reflect a systematic approach to erasing evidence of crimes. The international community's lack of decisive action raises concerns about accountability and justice for the victims.

The psychological impact on survivors and the community at large is profound. The act of forced burials, often in unsafe and hurried conditions, adds to the trauma experienced by the civilian population. Moreover, the lack of international intervention and support exacerbates the sense of abandonment felt by those affected.

Evidence and field testimonies confirm that extra-judicial field executions have occurred, which the occupation army is attempting to conceal through random burials.

Despite limited resources due to the ongoing conflict, local teams and authorities have made significant efforts to document this evidence clearly.

International institutions and powerful countries have not adequately utilized this evidence, relying instead on preliminary media reports rather than comprehensive accounts from official and civil organizations in Palestine.

The findings in this report underline the urgent need for international attention and action. The establishment and discovery of mass graves in the Gaza Strip are indicative of severe human rights violations that demand a thorough investigation and accountability. The report urges global actors to step in, support forensic investigations, and ensure that justice is served for the victims of these alleged war crimes. Immediate measures should be taken to protect civilians and uphold international humanitarian laws in conflict zones.

These acts constitute grave violations of the:

- Geneva Conventions (1949) and their Additional Protocols (1977): Geneva Convention IV, Article 130 emphasizes the need for proper burial and respect for the dead. It mandates that "the graves shall be respected, maintained, and marked so that they can always be found." It also states that the dead must be buried individually and, if possible, according to the rites of their religion.

Additional Protocol I, Article 34: This protocol reaffirms the obligation to search for, collect, and evacuate the dead and to prevent their bodies from being despoiled. It also specifies that bodies should be properly identified and interred individually, wherever possible.

- Customary International Humanitarian Law (IHL): Rule 115 dictates that "The dead must be disposed of in a respectful manner and their graves respected and properly maintained." It emphasizes that the remains of the deceased should be handled with dignity and that mass graves are to be avoided.
- Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998): Article 8(2)(b)(xxi) categorizes the "committing of outrages upon personal dignity" as a war crime, which includes the disrespectful handling of dead bodies.
- The Hague Regulations (1907): Article 17 stipulates that the bodies of the deceased, particularly those from the opposing force, should be honorably interred and that proper records should be kept, reinforcing the prohibition against mass burials without due care.
- United Nations Guidelines and Resolutions: UN General Assembly Resolutions: Various resolutions have called for the respectful treatment of the dead and the maintenance of proper burial practices, condemning mass burials as violations of human dignity.

These legal instruments collectively prohibit the mass burial of civilians in mass graves during times of war, ensuring that the deceased are treated with dignity and respect, that their identities are preserved, and that their graves are properly maintained and marked.

Thus, all concerned bodies should:

- Utilize Documented Evidence: Leverage the evidence documented by official and civil institutions in Palestine to frame the narrative about the establishment of mass graves, addressing political, legal, and humanitarian aspects.
- Incorporate into Legal Actions: Include the issue of mass graves in the lawsuit filed by the State of South Africa against the Israeli occupation for genocide, aligning with calls for an international criminal investigation.
- Engage International Law and Human Rights Institutions: Urge institutions related to international law and human rights, as well as active states, to give this issue more attention, thereby contributing to the imposition of sanctions on the occupation army and authorities.

- Raise Global Awareness: Disseminate comprehensive information about this issue globally to highlight its psychological, social, and political effects on civilians in the blockaded Gaza Strip and to mobilize international actions in response to the ongoing crimes committed by the occupation army.

By addressing these recommendations, the international community can take significant steps towards ensuring justice for the victims and preventing further atrocities committed by the Israeli military against civilians in the besieged coastal enclave of Gaza.



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