

# Human Rights Violations in Gaza: A Humanitarian Perspective on Civilian Suffering.

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*Abstract- The conflict in Gaza has created a severe humanitarian crisis affecting the lives and dignity of civilians. Continuous violence, destruction of homes, displacement of families, and shortages of basic necessities such as food, clean water, medical care, and shelter have significantly affected the well-being of the population. In such situations, the protection of human life and the reduction of human suffering become the most important humanitarian concerns. This research paper examines the situation in Gaza from a humanitarian perspective by focusing on the impact of the conflict on civilians, particularly vulnerable groups such as women, children, and the elderly. The study highlights issues such as displacement, loss of livelihood, lack of healthcare facilities, and psychological trauma experienced by the affected population. It emphasizes the importance of humanity, compassion, and respect for human dignity during times of armed conflict. The paper argues that addressing the humanitarian needs of civilians should be a priority in conflict situations. A humanitarian approach helps in understanding the human cost of war and stresses the need to protect basic human rights, ensure access to essential resources, and reduce the suffering of innocent people caught in conflict zones.*

*Index Terms- Human Rights, Gaza Conflict, Humanitarian aid, Human Dignity, war crimes, Basic needs.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Israel – Palestine dispute is one of the most long-standing and complex conflicts in the modern world. It has deep historical, religious, political, and territorial roots. The conflict traces back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when Jewish and Arab national movements clashed over the land of Palestine, then under Ottoman and later British rule. In 1948, the establishment of the State of Israel led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, an event Palestinians call the Nakba (catastrophe). Since then, wars, uprisings (intifadas),

and failed peace efforts have shaped relations between Israel and Palestine. Central issues include disputes over land, borders, the status of Jerusalem, refugees' right of return, and security concerns.

A major flashpoint within this conflict is the Gaza Strip. Gaza, a small coastal territory, is home to more than 2 million Palestinians, many of whom are refugees and their descendants. Since 2007, it has been governed by Hamas, and Israel has imposed a strict blockade by land, sea, and air, citing security reasons. This blockade has severely restricted the movement of people, goods, and essential supplies, creating a humanitarian crisis.

Human rights organizations, including the United Nations, have documented widespread violations in Gaza. Civilians face lack of clean water, electricity shortages, damaged healthcare facilities, and limited access to medicines. Frequent military escalations between Israel and armed groups in Gaza result in high civilian casualties, especially among women and children. The use of indiscriminate rocket fire from Gaza and heavy bombardments by Israel further worsen the humanitarian condition. Reports of arbitrary arrests, restrictions on free movement, and destruction of civilian infrastructure reflect ongoing violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. The dispute and its consequences in Gaza highlight the urgent need for a just and peaceful resolution. Beyond politics and territorial claims, the human cost remains the most pressing concern, as ordinary people continue to suffer in the absence of lasting peace.

## II. HISTORY OF THE PALESTINE CONFLICT (DEEP ROOTED OVERVIEW)

The conflict between Israel and Palestine is one of the longest and most complicated disputes in the

modern world. It has religious, political, territorial, and cultural roots that go back thousands of years, but the modern conflict mainly began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

#### 1. ANCIENT TIMES AND BIBLICAL ERA:

The land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River, historically called Canaan, Judea, or Palestine, has been home to different peoples for thousands of years. According to Jewish tradition, this was the land promised to Abraham and his descendants. Ancient Kingdoms of Israel and Judah existed here around 1000 BCE. The First Temple (built by King Solomon) and later the Second Temple made Jerusalem the religious heart of Judaism<sup>1</sup>

#### 2. THE ERA OF JESUS CHRIST AND ROMAN RULE (1<sup>st</sup> CENTURY BC):

By the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE, the land was under the Roman Empire and known as Judea. This was the time of Jesus Christ, who preached in Galilee and Jerusalem. After his crucifixion and resurrection (around 30–33 CE), Christianity began to spread. Tensions between Jews and Romans were high. In 70 CE, after a Jewish revolt, the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the Second Temple<sup>2</sup>

#### 3. BYZANTINE CHRISTIAN RULE (4<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> CENTURY CE):

In the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Roman Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity. Jerusalem became a Christian holy city, and churches such as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre were built.

#### 4. ISLAMIC CONQUEST AND ARAB RULE (7<sup>th</sup> CENTURY):

In 638 CE, Muslim armies conquered Jerusalem. For Muslims, it became the site of Prophet Muhammad's Isra and Mi'raj (Night Journey), linked to the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Under Islamic and later Ottoman rule (1517–1917), Palestinians—mostly Muslims, with Christian minorities—lived continuously in the land. By this time, all three religions claimed the land as holy.<sup>3</sup>

#### 5. OTTOMAN EMPIRE THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY (1517–1917):

The Ottoman Empire ruled Palestine from 1517 until World War I. The population was mostly Arab Muslims and Christians, with small Jewish communities in cities like Jerusalem, Hebron, and Safed. In the late 1800s, two new nationalist movements rose. Zionism: A Jewish movement seeking to return and establish a homeland in Palestine. Arab Nationalism: Arabs sought independence from Ottoman and later European rule.<sup>4</sup>

#### 6. WORLD WAR I AND THE BRITISH MANDATE (1917–1947):

In 1917, Britain issued the Balfour Declaration, promising a “national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine while also stating existing non-Jewish communities' rights should not be harmed. After the Ottomans lost WWI, the League of Nations gave Britain the Mandate over Palestine. Jewish immigration increased, especially as Jews fled European antisemitism and later the Holocaust. Arabs opposed large-scale Jewish settlement, fearing displacement. Violence between the groups and against the British grew.

#### 7. PARTITION AND THE 1948 ARAB ISRAELI WAR:

In 1947, the United Nations Partition Plan (Resolution 181) proposed dividing Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state, with Jerusalem as an international city. Jews accepted the plan; Arabs rejected it, calling it unfair. In May 1948, Jews declared the State of Israel. Neighbouring Arab states invaded. Israel survived the war and expanded its territory. More than 700,000 Palestinians fled or were expelled known as the Nakba (Catastrophe)<sup>5</sup>. The West Bank came under Jordan, and Gaza under Egypt.

#### 8. 1967 SIX DAY WAR AND THE OCCUPATION:

In June 1967, Israel fought Egypt, Syria, and Jordan. It captured the West Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem, Sinai, and Golan Heights. Since then, Israel has controlled Palestinian territories, building settlements in the West Bank. The UN Security Council's Resolution<sup>6</sup> 242 (1967) called for Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories and recognition of all states.

9.1970s–1980s: LIMITED PEACE AND PALESTINIAN UPRISING:

Egypt–Israel Peace (Camp David Accords 1978; Treaty 1979<sup>7</sup>): Israel returned Sinai to Egypt the first Arab–Israeli peace treaty, but it left the Palestinian question unresolved. First Intifada (1987–1993):<sup>8</sup> A largely grassroots uprising in the West Bank and Gaza against Israeli rule. It brought global attention and pushed both sides toward negotiations.

10.1990s: OSLO PEACE PROCESS AND THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY:

Oslo I (1993) – Declaration of Principles: Israel and the PLO recognized each other. A Palestinian Authority (PA) was created for limited self-rule in parts of the West Bank and Gaza; final-status issues (Jerusalem, borders, refugees, settlements, security) were left for later talks. Oslo II (1995): Divided the West Bank into Areas A, B, and C with differing Palestinian/Israeli control. Security cooperation and phased steps were envisioned but never fully realized.<sup>11</sup> Despite hope, trust declined. Violence, settlement growth, and political changes on both sides undermined progress.

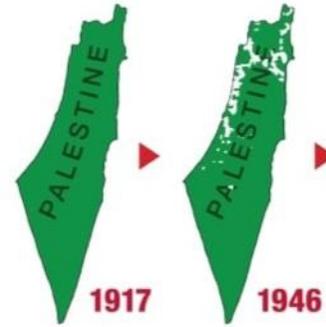
11. CORE ISSUES TODAY:

1. Borders – Where to draw permanent lines between Israel and Palestine.
2. Jerusalem – Sacred to Jews, Christians, and Muslims.
3. Refugees – Millions of Palestinians displaced since 1948 want the right to return.
4. Settlements – Israeli settlements in occupied West Bank declared illegal by UN.
5. Security – Israelis fear attacks; Palestinians fear occupation and blockades.

III. TIMELINE OF ISRAEL - PALESTINE  
GEOGRAPHICAL ISSUES:

1. 1917–1946: British Mandate of Palestine:

After World War I, Britain controlled Palestine under the League of Nations Mandate<sup>12</sup>. Arabs formed the majority population (~90%), while Jewish immigration increased under the Zionist movement and especially after the Holocaust. Tensions grew between Arabs (who demanded independence) and Jews (who wanted a homeland).



2.1947 – UN Partition Plan:

The United Nations Resolution 181 proposed dividing Palestine into:

Jewish state → 55% land.

Arab state → 45% land.

Jerusalem → international city (corpus separatum).

The Jewish leadership accepted the plan, but Arab states and Palestinian leaders rejected it. Geographical Issue: Arbitrary borders → no agreement between communities.<sup>9</sup>

3.1948 Arab–Israeli War (Nakba):

On 14 May 1948,<sup>10</sup> Israel declared independence. Neighbouring Arab states attacked, but Israel won. Israel expanded to 78% of historic Palestine. West Bank annexed by Jordan; Gaza Strip controlled by Egypt. Around 700,000 Palestinians became refugees (Nakba = catastrophe).

4. 1967 Six-Day War:

Israel launched pre-emptive strikes against Egypt, Jordan, and Syria.

In six days, Israel captured:

- i. West Bank & East Jerusalem (from Jordan)
- ii. Gaza Strip & Sinai Peninsula (from Egypt)
- iii. Golan Heights (from Syria)



7. Present Day (2025):  
Israel controls: Main land, Jerusalem, borders, water resources, settlements.



For the first time, Israel occupied all Palestinian-populated areas.

#### 5. 1993 - 1995 Oslo Accords<sup>11</sup>:

First major peace process between Israel and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

West Bank divided into:

Area A → Palestinian Authority control (major towns).

Area B → Shared control.

Area C → Full Israeli control (60% land, including settlements). Gaza given limited autonomy.

Palestinians: Gaza (under Hamas rule, but blockaded). West Bank (fragmented control under Palestinian Authority, but settlements expanding). East Jerusalem: Claimed by both sides, but annexed by Israel (not recognized internationally)

#### 6. 2005 Gaza Disengagement:

Israel withdrew troops and settlers from Gaza. However, Israel retained control of borders, airspace, and sea. In 2007, Hamas took control of Gaza, creating division between Hamas (Gaza) and Fatah (West Bank). Gaza placed under blockade by Israel (and partly Egypt)<sup>12</sup>

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In my opinion When we look at Gaza, we see people just like us families, children, and elders who are suffering because of war and violence. Human rights violations are not just numbers or reports, they are real lives being destroyed. As simple human beings, we know in our hearts that everyone deserves food, water, safety, and dignity.

The Bible teaches in Matthew 7:12: “Treat other people the same way you want them to treat you.” If we follow this simple rule, there would be less hatred and more peace.

Mahatma Gandhi reminded us: “An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind.” This means that revenge and violence will never solve problems they only create more pain for everyone.

Other wise leaders also said the same:

Martin Luther King Jr: “Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

Nelson Mandela: “Courage is not the absence of fear it’s inspiring others to move beyond it.”

From a common person’s view, the lesson is clear: peace will never come from bombs or revenge. Peace will only come when people see each other as humans first, not enemies. Protecting human rights means giving everyone the chance to live safely, with respect and hope.

In the end, if we simply treat others as we want to be treated, the world including Gaza could become a place where families live without fear and children can grow up with dreams, not trauma.

#### FOOTNOTES

- [1] Place of Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection. This period marks the first major displacement of Jews and the rise of Christian sacred claims to the land.
- [2] Encyclopaedia Britannica – “Jewish Revolts and the Destruction of the Second Temple (70 CE); Balfour Declaration (1917)”
- [3] Encyclopaedia Britannica. (2024c). Jerusalem: Christian Period (Constantine, Holy Sepulchre).
- [4] Encyclopaedia Britannica. (2024d). Jerusalem: Islamic Period
- [5] UNRWA – Refugee displacement, Nakba 1948
- [6] UN Security Council Resolution 242 (1967)
- [7] Camp David Accords (1978) and Egypt–Israel Treaty (1979) peace and return of Sinai.

- [8] First Intifada (1987–93)—character and significance.
- [9] UN General Assembly Resolution 181 (II), 29 November 1947
- [10] Benny Morris, 1948: A History of the First Arab-Israeli War, Yale University Press, 2008
- [11] Oslo I Accord, Washington D.C., 1993
- [12] International Crisis Group, “After Gaza Disengagement,” Middle East Report No. 36, 2005