

Palestine

Attacks on education continued at high levels and intensified during 2024 and 2025, with hundreds of attacks on education facilities during hostilities in the Gaza Strip, as well as increased attacks on schools and students, teachers, and staff, in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Several cases of the military use of schools were reported.

Context

Hostilities in the Gaza Strip escalated during the 2024-2025 reporting period.¹ Israel continued to commit genocidal violence against the Palestinian population in Gaza, as observed by UN human rights experts;² Human Rights Watch reported that the Israeli military killed and wounded thousands of civilians in Gaza³ and forcibly displaced nearly 90 percent of the population.⁴ The UN reported that grave violations against children in Palestine increased during the reporting period; violence included the widespread use of explosive weapons.⁵ Meanwhile, Palestinian armed actors committed serious violations under international law, including attacks on civilians, and unlawfully holding hostages in Gaza.⁶

During the reporting period, Israel carried out aerial and ground operations in Gaza, and Palestinian armed groups fired rockets and mortars into Israel, as reported by Amnesty International.⁷ The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) reported that Israel took control over large portions of Gaza through large-scale operations; Israeli airstrikes damaged or destroyed locations used as shelters by displaced civilians around 380 times between January and November 2024.⁸ Palestinian armed groups deployed guerilla warfare, while also killing six Israeli hostages that had been taken on October 7, 2023, and continued to hold around one hundred captive.⁹ There was a ceasefire agreement between January and March 2025, which also resulted in an exchange where 33 Israeli hostages and 1,135 Palestinian prisoners were released, according to the UN, before Israel broke the ceasefire and continued its military assault on Gaza, although attacks continued throughout the ceasefire period.¹⁰

In the occupied West Bank, violence increased during the reporting period, as reported by the UN.¹¹ Starting in January 2025, Israel led its largest militarized law enforcement operation in the West Bank, which included the deployment of tanks for the first time since 2002. Between January 21 and June 30, 2025, Israeli forces killed 126 Palestinians, including 23 children, mostly in Jenin, Tubas, and Tulkarm governorates during the first 40 days of the operation.¹² OCHA recorded 4,428 demolitions of Palestinian structures between January 2024 and December 2025.¹³ At least 84 schools, mostly in Area C and East Jerusalem, faced full or partial demolition orders during the reporting period.¹⁴ These actions also triggered the largest displacement in the West Bank since 1967 as Israeli

forces emptied out Jenin, Tulkarem, and Nur Shams refugee camps.¹⁵ Since the ceasefire in Gaza entered into effect in October 2025, the violence in the West Bank continued with settler violence and resulting displacement increasing to unprecedented levels.¹⁶

In December 2025, OCHA estimated that 3.62 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance in Palestine.¹⁷ Despite the August 2025 UN declaration of famine in Gaza Governorate, Israel restricted the entry of most food and aid supplies to Gaza and used starvation and dehydration as a weapon war against civilians, as reported by the UN.¹⁸ Israeli forces also opened fire at civilians at militarized aid distribution sites and along aid routes, and 859 Palestinians were killed while attempting to access aid at Gaza Humanitarian Foundation sites between May 27 and July 31, 2025, as reported by Human Rights Watch.¹⁹ Aid workers in Gaza were also attacked, with 578 killed from October 7, 2023 to December 3, 2025.²⁰ In September 2025, the UNHRC Commission of Inquiry (COI) determined that Israel committed four genocidal acts between October 7, 2023 and July 31, 2025 and that the Israeli President, Prime Minister and former Defence Minister incited the commission of genocide.²¹

Violence impacted education during the reporting period. In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, growing violence and restrictions on movement have continued to result in school closures and children's absence from learning.²² Following the hostilities beginning October 2023 until 2025, all schools in the Gaza Strip remained closed resulting in around 658,000 school aged children being out of formal learning.²³ By the end of 2025, at least 323,359 children in Gaza and the West Bank accessed their education through temporary learning spaces in tents, semi-permanent classrooms, and refurbished classrooms.²⁴ Additionally, as of November 2025, 87,000 higher education students in Gaza could not access formal learning spaces.²⁵ As of November 2025, 97.5 percent of schools in Gaza sustained some type of damage and over 93.3 percent of these were severely damaged, according to the Education Cluster and the UN.²⁶

Attacks on schools

Attacks on schools, particularly airstrikes, continued at a high level throughout the 2024-2025 reporting period, when GCPEA identified at least 620 attacks on schools.²⁷ This is an increase as compared to the previous reporting period, when at least 475 attacks and interferences to education were reported in 2023 and at least 167 in 2022.²⁸ However, most school buildings in the Gaza Strip were severely damaged before and during the reporting period, as reported by the UN and the Education Cluster.²⁹

GCPEA identified 356 reports of attacks on schools in 2024.³⁰ Among these, a significant number involved the use of explosive weapons. The majority of attacks were reported in the Gaza Strip, while at least 20 attacks on schools, and interruption to education, were reported in the West Bank. In many incidents in the Gaza Strip, where many schools that were hosting IDPs were attacked, the Israeli military alleged that schools were being used

by members of armed groups or that targeted members of armed groups were staying in school shelters, although this was not independently verified. Separately, the UN identified 148 attacks on schools in 2024.³¹ Moreover, the Education Cluster identified 382 attacks on schools in 2024, including 216 attacks in the Gaza Strip and 166 in the West Bank.³² However, since it was not possible to establish whether these overlapped with incidents identified by GCPEA, this number was not added, to avoid double counting.

Examples of incidents involving explosive weapons in the Gaza Strip included:

- As reported by the UN, on May 22, 2024, Israeli forces allegedly shelled an UNRWA school in Jabalia, Gaza Strip, after surrounding the school with tanks.³³
- On May 31, 2024, an unexploded ordnance detonated in a school that was hosting IDPs in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip, injuring at least three people, as reported by the UN.³⁴
- As reported by ACLED and *The Times of Israel*, on July 24, 2024, Hamas-led fighters allegedly launched explosive devices that landed in an UNRWA school in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip.³⁵
- As reported by Human Rights Watch, on July 27, 2024, Israeli forces struck Khadija girl's school in Deir al Balah, Gaza Strip, killing at least 15 people who sheltered in that school.³⁶
- As reported by Human Rights Watch, on September 21, 2024, Israeli forces struck al-Zeitoun C school in Gaza City, killing at least 34 people who sheltered in that school.³⁷
- As reported by UNRWA and ACLED, on October 6, 2024, in Beit Lahiya, Gaza Strip, an Israeli airstrike hit an UNRWA school.³⁸ The Israeli military claimed the school was being used for military purposes, as reported by *The Times of Israel*.³⁹
- On October 21, 2024, in Jabalia, Gaza Strip, the Israeli military ordered IDPs at an UNRWA school to evacuate before carrying out an attack on the school, as reported by the UN and Human Rights Watch.⁴⁰
- On December 15, 2024, in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip, an Israeli airstrike allegedly targeted Ahmed bin Abdul Azeez UNRWA school which was hosting IDPs, as reported by the UN and International Rescue Committee.⁴¹ According to reports, the school was within the Israeli-designated "humanitarian zone," the attack occurred without prior warning, and killed at least 20 people.
- On December 22, 2024, in Al-Daraj neighbourhood, Gaza City, Gaza Strip, the Israeli military allegedly shelled a school that was hosting IDPs, as reported by ACLED and international media *Al Jazeera*.⁴² Eight people were killed.

Other incidents in the Gaza strip included:

- On February 10, 2024, Israeli forces allegedly used a bulldozer to destroy part of a school that was sheltering IDPs in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip, as reported by the UN.⁴³
- On October 20, 2024, in northern Gaza, Gaza Strip, an attack by Israeli forces allegedly led to a fire inside the Hamad School that was sheltering IDPs, as reported by local media *Wafa*.⁴⁴

- On December 3, 2024, in Beit Lahiya, Gaza Strip, Israeli forces allegedly surrounded a school sheltering IDPs and fired live ammunition into the school, as reported by international media *Al Jazeera* and *Anadolu Agency*.⁴⁵

At least 150 attacks on schools were identified in the West Bank, for example:

- As reported by the UN, in Khallet Amira, Hebron Governorate, West Bank on July 8, 2024, Israeli forces demolished a school, impacting the education of 49 students.⁴⁶
- As reported by UNRWA, between July 25 and July 29, 2024, an operation by the Israeli military in Tulkarm Refugee Camp, West Bank, damaged at least two UNRWA schools.⁴⁷
- As reported by the UN, on September 16, 2024, Israeli settlers, accompanied by Israeli forces, allegedly stormed Al Mu'arrajat East Bedouin Elementary School, Jericho Governorate, West Bank, while school was in session, and injured two female teachers. According to the same reports, Israeli forces allegedly arrested and bound two Palestinians, including the principal of the school, who were then physically attacked by settlers.⁴⁸ The school reportedly served approximately 100 students, and was under demolition orders at the time of the attack.
- On September 19, 2024, Israeli settlers allegedly threw stones at a primary school and a secondary school in Al Jabah, Bethlehem governorate, West Bank, as reported by international media *Anadolu Agency* and ACLED.⁴⁹ Students were sent home; no injuries were reported.
- As reported by UNRWA, on October 15, 2024, during an operation by Israeli forces in Jenin Refugee Camp, West Bank, windows of an UNRWA school were damaged.⁵⁰

GCPEA identified 158 reports of attacks on schools in 2025.⁵¹ Among these, a significant number involved the use of explosive weapons. Under half of the attacks counted were reported in the Gaza Strip, while the majority of attacks were reported in the West Bank, including 85 stop-work orders and pending demolitions against schools.⁵² In many incidents in the Gaza Strip, where many schools that were hosting IDPs were attacked, the Israeli military alleged that schools were being used by members of armed groups or that targeted members of armed groups were staying in school shelters, although this was not independently verified.

Examples of incidents involving explosive weapons in the Gaza Strip included:

- On January 11, 2025, an aircraft bombed a school classroom in Jabalia, Gaza Strip, killing eight people and injuring over 30 people who were sheltering, as reported by international media *Anadolu Agency* and ACLED.⁵³
- On January 16, 2025, aircraft bombed a school in Zaytun neighborhood, Gaza City, Gaza Strip, killing two people and injuring over 30 people who were sheltering, as reported by local media *Al Quds* and ACLED.⁵⁴

- On May 26, 2025, intense shelling and missiles hit a school in Al-Daraj neighbourhood, Gaza City, Gaza Strip, killing 36 people sheltering inside, according to local media *Al Quds*. Eyewitnesses reported hearing screaming after the attack and seeing missile fragments hundreds of meters away.⁵⁵
- On September 13, 2025, multiple Israeli airstrikes directly hit three UNRWA schools in Al-Shati camp, Gaza Strip, according to the UN and local media *Al Quds*. The schools were significantly damaged, and an adjacent UNRWA school was also reportedly damaged.⁵⁶
- On October 19, 2025, an UNRWA school was shelled in An-Nuseirat, Gaza Strip, killing at least four children and injuring others who were sheltering, according to the UN.⁵⁷
- On December 13, 2025, an UNRWA school was hit by the detonation of an Israeli armoured vehicle in Tuffah neighborhood, Gaza City, Gaza Strip, resulting in significant damage, according to the UN.⁵⁸

Other incidents in the Gaza Strip included:

- On January 28, 2025, a group of people were fired upon when attempting to return to their homes near a school near Zaytun neighborhood, Gaza City, Gaza Strip, as reported by local news *Wafa* and *ACLEd*.⁵⁹
- On December 21, 2025, shooting indirectly impacted an UNRWA school in Jabalia, Gaza Strip, causing minor damage, according to the UN.⁶⁰

Incidents in the West Bank included:

- On January 6, 2025, Israeli settlers raided a primary school in Bardala, Northern Jordan Valley, West Bank, after they said the students threw rocks, according to the UN. After the attack was protested by teachers and residents, Israeli forces shot live ammunition into the air, used crowd control gas, and arrested a Palestinian.⁶¹
- On January 8, 2025, tear gas was fired against protestors near a school east of Bethlehem, West Bank, causing students and teachers inside to suffer breathing difficulties from inhaling the gas, as reported by local news *Al Quds* and *ACLEd*.⁶²
- On March 3, 2025, Palestine Mixed Elementary School in Ashkara, Masafer Yatta, West Bank, was raided and issued a demolition order on the grounds that it lacked the proper license, as reported by local news *Wafa*.⁶³
- On May 8, 2025, Israeli forces raided three schools in Shu'fat, East Jerusalem, West Bank, in order to enforce closure orders that were issued previously according to the Education Cluster. Forces harassed teachers, detained one staff member, and evacuated 350 students from classrooms.⁶⁴
- On August 28, 2025, six schools were raided in Harat al-Sheikh and the southern area of Hebron, West Bank, and a number of teachers were detained, as reported by local news *Wafa*. Educational materials like textbooks and pictures were allegedly confiscated.⁶⁵

- On September 4, 2025, over a dozen Israeli settlers raided the community of Khamat Athaba', Masafer Yatta, West Bank, and attacked residents with sticks that had knives attached, according to the UN. The local school was one of the structures damaged during the attack.⁶⁶

Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

GCPEA identified at least 2,400 attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel during the 2024-2025 reporting period. This is a significant increase as compared to the previous reporting period, when at least 235 attacks were identified in 2023 and at least 150 in 2022.⁶⁷ All attacks identified by GCPEA were in the West Bank.

GCPEA identified 1,500 attacks in 2024, which harmed at least 57 students and staff.⁶⁸ This count included 24 detentions of students and school personnel while present at schools or commuting to and from schools across the West Bank over the course of 2024, as well as hundreds of delays at checkpoints and restrictions on movement.⁶⁹

Other incidents counted included:

- On February 14, 2024, Israeli forces reportedly raided Beit Ummar village in Hebron, West Bank, firing live ammunition, when students were leaving school, killing a 16-year-old boy and injuring ten more children, as reported by the UN.⁷⁰
- On February 21, 2024, in Al Khadir, Bethlehem Governorate, West Bank, Israeli forces allegedly fired tear gas and stun grenades at the Al Khadir Girls Secondary School while the school was in session, as reported by ACLED and local media.⁷¹ Several girls reportedly suffered breathing difficulties.
- On May 21, 2024, in Jenin, West Bank, Israeli forces allegedly fired live ammunition during a raid in Jenin Refugee Camp, killing at least two male students and one teacher, as they were leaving school, which had closed as a result of the raid, as reported by the UN and international media *Middle East Eye*.⁷²
- On October 30, 2024, and again on November 13, 17, and 26, 2024, in Al Khader, Bethlehem Governorate, West Bank, Israeli forces allegedly fired teargas in the vicinity of Al-Khader Elementary School, causing at least 19 students to suffer breathing difficulties, as reported by OCHA, ACLED and local media *Wafa* and *Al Quds*.⁷³
- On December 10, 2024, in the village of Al Lubban ash Sharqiya, an alleged Israeli settler reportedly hit a male student with their vehicle, and attempted to hit three more female students, as they were leaving school, as reported by the UN.⁷⁴ The boy sustained bone fractures as a result.

GCPEA identified at least 890 attacks in 2025, which harmed at least 18 students. This count included 18 detentions of students and school personnel while on the way to and from schools, as well as hundreds of delays at checkpoints and restrictions on movement, across the West Bank over the course of 2025.⁷⁵ Examples included:

- On January 13, 2025, students on their way to school were attacked with tear gas and sound bombs in Al-Khader, Bethlehem, West Bank, as reported by local media *Wafa* and *ACLEd*. Several students suffocated as a result.⁷⁶
- On March 4, 2025, students on their way from school were attacked with tear gas and sound bombs in Al-Khader, Bethlehem, West Bank, as reported by local media *Wafa* and *ACLEd*. Several students suffocated as a result.⁷⁷
- On August 18, 2025, teachers reported repeated harassment while commuting to and from Khirbet Yanun, Nablus, West Bank, according to the UN. Threats from Israeli settlers towards 16 primary school students and six staff members caused the Palestinian Ministry of Education to temporarily relocate them to a nearby school in Aqraba.⁷⁸

Military use of schools and universities

GCPEA identified at least ten cases of the military use of educational facilities during the 2024-2025 reporting period. This is a similar number as compared to the previous reporting period, when at least ten cases were identified in 2023, and one in 2022.⁷⁹

GCPEA identified 16 cases of military use in 2024.⁸⁰ Separately, the UN verified eight cases of the military use of schools in Palestine in 2024.⁸¹ Moreover, the Education Cluster identified three incidents of military use in the West Bank and four in the Gaza Strip in 2024.⁸² However, the incidents in the Gaza Strip were not added to GCPEA's total, to avoid double counting, since it is not clear whether any of these overlapped with the incidents collected by GCPEA. Examples included:

- As reported by the UN and international media, on 30 January, 2024, at least 30 buried bodies were discovered, with hands bound and eyes covered, in an UNRWA school in Beit Lahiya, northern Gaza; the school was reportedly besieged on 7 December, 2023.⁸³
- As reported by international media, on 30 January, 2024, Israeli forces allegedly occupied Al-Aqsa University in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip.⁸⁴
- On April 29, 2024, Israeli forces allegedly set up a checkpoint in Al-Mughayir, West Bank, near Al-Mughayir Boys Secondary School, as reported by international media *Middle East Monitor*.⁸⁵
- On October 13, 2024, Israeli forces allegedly stormed Madama village, West Bank, and set up a checkpoint near a secondary school that was in session, and fired live ammunition, causing fear and panic among students, as reported by *ACLEd* and local media *Wafa*.⁸⁶

- As reported by the UN, on December 15, 2024, Israeli forces allegedly detained and killed people at Khalil Owaidah School sheltering IDPs in 'Izbat Beit Hanun, in North Gaza.⁸⁷

GCPEA identified one case of military use in 2025, which occurred in the West Bank.⁸⁸

Attacks on higher education

GCPEA identified at least 30 attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel during the 2024-2025 reporting period. This is a decline as compared to the previous reporting period, when at least six attacks were identified in 2023, and 22 in 2022.⁸⁹ According to the UN, virtually all universities and colleges had been affected by conflict as of November 2025: 38 campuses were assessed, with 95 percent of the 206 buildings assessed either destroyed or severely damaged by aerial bombardments and ground operations, although it was not clear how many of these attacks occurred during GCPEA's current reporting period.⁹⁰

GCPEA identified 27 attacks on higher education in 2024, the majority of which involved the use of explosive weapons and were attacks on higher education infrastructure in the Gaza Strip, while there were three attacks in the West Bank, two on universities and one on higher education students.⁹¹ Examples included:

- On January 23, 2024, armed clashes allegedly took place near the Al-Aqsa University in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip, as reported by international media *Al Jazeera*.⁹²
- On January 24, 2024, shelling allegedly struck an UNRWA vocational training center in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip, that was being used as a shelter by IDPs, as reported by UNRWA, international media *Voice of America*, and ACLED.⁹³ Scores were reportedly killed.
- On February 13, 2024, shelling allegedly struck near the University college in Gaza City, Gaza Strip, as reported by ACLED and local media *Wafa*.⁹⁴
- As reported by Scholars at Risk, on February 22, 2024, Israeli forces allegedly arrested two students from Birzeit University in Birzeit, West Bank.⁹⁵
- As reported by the UN, on July 20, 2024, a weapon struck a Community College in Gaza City.⁹⁶
- On August 3, 2024, shelling completely destroyed buildings at the University College of Applied Sciences in the Tel al-Hawa neighborhood, Gaza City, Gaza Strip. as reported by international media *Anadolu Agency*.⁹⁷
- On November 26, 2024, Israeli forces stormed Birzeit University in Birzeit, West Bank, detained two students who were on campus, assaulted university guards, and vandalized property, as reported by local media *Wafa*.⁹⁸

GCPEA identified three attacks on higher education in 2025:

- On April 8, 2025, Al-Quds University was stormed in Abu Dis, West Bank, ahead of a planned demonstration against the Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip, as reported by Scholars at Risk, local media, and ACLED. Tear gas and stun grenades were allegedly fired at students, resulting in 23 being injured.⁹⁹
- On September 14, 2025, Israeli forces reportedly raided the homes of approximately 30 students and two deans from Hebron University and the Palestine Polytechnic University in Hebron, West Bank, to arrest them, according to the UN. The forces took them to the university premises and detained them there, blindfolded and handcuffed, for at least three hours. The universities were also raided, though no damage to the facilities was reported.¹⁰⁰
- On September 14, 2025, at least one of the buildings of the Islamic University was hit in Rimal neighborhood, Gaza City, Gaza Strip, killing at least seven people, according to the UN. High-explosive missiles reportedly struck again when IDPs sheltering in one of the buildings returned for their belongings.¹⁰¹