

Gaza aid ‘like lifeboat to sunk ship’

theday.co.uk/gaza-aid-like-lifeboat-to-sunk-ship-4 29 May 2025



Desperate: More than 52,000 people have died and at least 118,000 have been injured in Gaza. The healthcare system is on the edge of collapse and 90% of the population has been forced to flee their homes.

Is this a genocide? More and more voices accuse Israel of committing the ultimate crime against humanity. Some think politics will turn out to be more important than legal proof.

What's happening?

More than 400 writers have this week signed a letter accusing Israel of committing “genocidal action” against the Palestinians in Gaza.

Israel furiously denies committing genocide and insists it is fighting a war of self-defence against **Hamas**.

Find out more

When the **UN** decided to make genocide a crime against humanity under international law after World War Two, it defined genocide in terms of five acts: killing members of an **ethnic, national, racial, or religious** group; causing them serious bodily or mental harm; imposing conditions that make life impossible; preventing births; and forcibly transferring children out of a group.

The definition also states that the **perpetrator** must carry out these acts “with intent to destroy, in whole or in part”, the group of people in question.

In its legal case accusing Israel of acts of genocide, South Africa points to statements made by Israeli leaders which, it says, implied all the people of Gaza should be targeted.

Amnesty International, meanwhile, looks to the broader pattern of Israeli behaviour, arguing the devastation in Gaza can only be understood as deliberate.

Is this genocide?

Some say

Yes! Israeli Holocaust scholar Raz Segal called the situation a “textbook case” of genocide 18 months ago, the deliberate elimination of a people.

Others think

No! British journalist Dan Hodges argues that since Hamas started this phase of the conflict, it bears ultimate responsibility for all Palestinian deaths.

Six steps to discovery

Some people say

1. Connect

How do you feel about this story? - What do you feel when you see the news from Gaza?

"The first time it was reported that our friends were being butchered there was a cry of horror. Then a hundred were butchered. But when a thousand were butchered and there was no end to the butchery, a blanket of silence spread."

Bertolt Brecht (1898 – 1956), German playwright

What do you think?

2. Wonder

What questions do you have? - For example: Are genocides common? Is humanity naturally violent?

3. Investigate

What are the facts? - Pick out one thing we know for certain and one thing we cannot say for sure about this story.

4. Construct

What is your point of view? - You are the foreign minister of your country. How do you respond to Israel's actions in Gaza?

5. Express

What do others believe? - Get in a small group and work together to write a letter to your local political representative expressing your views on Israel's war on Gaza.

6. Reflect

What might happen next? - It is 2045. Write a newspaper article describing how this event is seen and understood two decades on.

Glossary

Hamas - A militant Palestinian organisation, which has controlled the Gaza Strip since 2007. It is listed as a terrorist organisation in the UK.

UN - United Nations. An intergovernmental organisation based in New York that aims to maintain international peace and security.

Ethnic - Relating to a group of people who share a race, nationality or cultural group.

National - Relating to or belonging to a whole country or nation.

Racial - Relating to, based on, or characteristic of race or people of different races.

Religious - Relating to a religion, or belief in God or gods.

Perpetrator - A person who does something illegal or harmful.

Amnesty International - An international non-governmental organisation focused on human rights.