



◀ Hamas fighters celebrate after liberating Palestinian inmates in a prisoner exchange with Israel in an unknown location in the Gaza Strip amid a temporary truce on November 29, 2023.
● AL-QASSAM BRIGADES/REUTERS

ty studies at Kings College London, said: "Israel takes a very broad approach to ' Hamas membership', which includes any affiliation with the organisation, including civil servants or administrators."

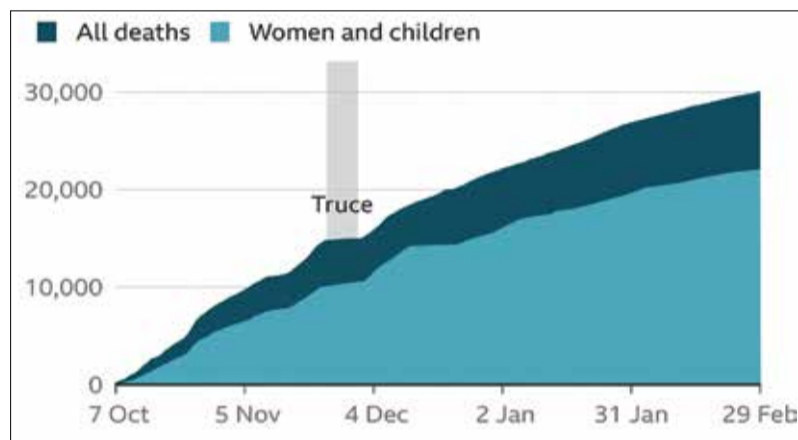
The fatality data for the current conflict from the Gaza health ministry shows a sharp increase in the proportion of women and children among the dead compared with previous wars.

This "indicates a much higher civilian death rate," according to Rachel Taylor, the executive director of the Every Casualty Counts organisation, a UK-based organisation that aims to record victims of violent conflicts.

Nearly half of Gaza's population is under 18 and about 44% of the fatalities of war are also children, according to the Gaza authorities' February 29 demographic data. Ms. Taylor said the fact that the deaths closely track the demographics of the general population "indicates indiscriminate killing".

"In contrast, in 2014, there was a fairly high percentage of 'fighting age' men among the dead, but this is much less evident today," she said.

The pace of killing appears, on the face of it, to have slowed down, from about 330 deaths a day in the first month of the



⬆ The chart shows the proportion of women and children's deaths in Gaza compared to all deaths registered throughout the Israel-Hamas war up until February 29, 2024.
● BBC

conflict to approximately 110 deaths a day over the past month.

But some experts told the BBC that the real scale of those killed by the Israeli offensive is likely to be significantly higher as many hospitals, where deaths are usually recorded, are no longer operating.

These figures also only include deaths from military attacks, according to the health ministry's spokesman, and not starvation or disease, which are in-

creasingly concerning international aid organisations.

B'tselem, a Jerusalem-based human rights organisation, said the current war is far deadlier than previous conflicts between Israel and Gaza.

Spokesperson Dror Sadot said, "These are numbers that we never saw in previous wars and strikes in Gaza or the other territories."

The article first appeared on BBC.

and diplomats alike.

Israeli authorities also knew that their armories were vulnerable to theft. A military report from early last year noted that thousands of bullets and hundreds of guns and grenades had been stolen from poorly guarded bases.

From there, the report said, some made their way to the West Bank, and others to Gaza by way of Sinai, but the report focused on military security. The consequences were treated almost as an afterthought: "We are fueling our enemies with our own weapons," read one line of the report, which was viewed by The New York Times.

The consequences became apparent on October 7. Hours after Hamas breached the border, four Israeli soldiers discovered the body of a Hamas gunman who was killed outside the Re'im military base. Hebrew writing was visible on a grenade on his belt, said one of the soldiers, who recognized it as a bulletproof Israeli grenade, a recent model. Other Hamas fighters overran the base, and Israeli

military officials say some weapons were looted and returned to Gaza.

A few miles away, members of an Israeli forensic team collected one of the 5,000 rockets fired by Hamas that day. Examining the rocket, they discovered that its military-grade explosives had most likely come from an unexploded Israeli missile fired into Gaza during a previous war, according to an Israeli intelligence officer.

One Western military official said that most of the explosives that Hamas is using in its war with Israel appear to have been manufactured using unexploded Israeli-launched munitions. One example, the official said, was an explosive booby trap that killed 10 Israeli soldiers in December.

Hamas cannot manufacture everything. Some things are easier to buy from the black market and smuggle into Gaza. Sinai, the largely uninhabited desert region between Israel, Egypt, and the Gaza Strip, remains a hub for arms smuggling. Weapons from conflicts in Libya, Eritrea, and Afghanistan have been discovered in

Sinai, according to Israeli intelligence assessments.

According to two Israeli intelligence officials, at least a dozen small tunnels were still running between Gaza and Egypt before October 7. A spokesperson for the Egyptian government said its military had done its part to shut down tunnels on its side of the border. "Many of the weapons currently inside the Gaza Strip are the result of smuggling from within Israel," the spokesperson said in an email. Israel estimates that it has conducted at least 22,000 strikes on Gaza since October 7. Each often involves multiple rounds, meaning tens of thousands of munitions have likely been dropped or fired — and thousands failed to detonate.

"Artillery, hand grenades, other munitions — tens of thousands of unexploded ordnance — will be left after this war," said Charles Birch, the head of the UN Mine Action Service in Gaza. These "are like a free gift to Hamas".

The article first appeared on The New York Times.

Anesthetics, crutches, dates

Inside Israel's ghost list of items arbitrarily denied entry into Gaza

By Qiblawi, Goodwin, Elbagir, Faraj, and Khadder
CNN Reporters

INVESTIGATION

Humanitarian workers and government officials working to deliver urgently needed aid for Gaza say a clear pattern has emerged of Israeli obstruction, as disease and near-famine grip parts of the besieged enclave. The Israeli agency that controls access to Gaza for the multi-billion-dollar aid effort has imposed arbitrary and contradictory criteria, according to more than two dozen humanitarian and government officials interviewed by CNN.

CNN has also reviewed documents compiled by major participants in the humanitarian operation that list the items most frequently rejected by the Israelis. These include anesthetics and anesthesia machines, oxygen cylinders, ventilators, and water filtration systems.

Other items that have ended up in bureaucratic limbo include dates, sleeping bags, medicines to treat cancer, water purification tablets, and maternity kits.

For months, queues of trucks bound for the enclave have been backed up along the highway leading from the Egyptian town of Arish, a major logistical hub for aid, to the Rafah crossing with Gaza. In a satellite image from February 21, a queue of trucks can be seen stretching out for 4 miles from the crossing.

Most of CNN's sources requested anonymity for fear, they said, of reprisals and further Israeli restrictions on an already choked aid pipeline.

Several sources said a substantial portion of the donations they handled were either rejected or held up by a long wait for clearance by Israel's Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories, or COGAT, which manages the flow of aid into the strip.

"It's perfectly engineered chaos," said one CNN source who oversees donations from four different relief organizations at one of the transit routes. Over 15,000 tons of their relief supplies await Israeli approval to enter Gaza, the source said. More than half consists of food items.

"It's deliberately opaque, deliberately ambiguous," said another senior humanitarian official. "You can receive clearance from COGAT and arrive to find police or finance and customs officials who will send the truck back." Israel has long barred certain items from entering Gaza. In 2007, it imposed a blockade on the strip after Hamas took over. A year later, COGAT released a list of banned "dual use" items, making slight modifications to the document in the years that followed.

These are goods that, it said, could be repurposed for military use and would be barred from entering Gaza, such as concrete, agricultural fertilizer, certain chemicals, and other miscellaneous items like binoculars, underwater cameras, and water skis. In a January 13 press conference, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu boasted about permitting "minimal humanitarian aid" to enter

Gaza. "We provide minimal humanitarian aid," Netanyahu said. "If we want to achieve our war goals, we give the minimal aid."

The international community has repeatedly criticized Israel for issuing insufficient permits, and security clearances, for aid trucks to Gaza. There have also been instances where the Israeli military struck food deliveries. Looting by desperate civilians and criminal gangs in some of the hardest hit areas in the north of Gaza has intensified that crisis, bringing UN food deliveries there to a grinding halt.

Exacerbating the situation is an apparent ghost list impeding the delivery of a wide range of items.

Janti Soeripto, Save the Children US president and chief executive, who visited the Egyptian side of the Rafah crossing with a UN convoy in January, told CNN she saw several items that Israeli inspectors had turned back.

She said toys were rejected because they were in a wooden box rather than a cardboard box, sleeping bags were denied because they had zippers, and sanitary pads were turned back because a nail clipper was included in the hygiene kit.

In January, US Senators Chris Van Hollen and Jeff Merkley saw maternity kits and water filtration systems among the items Israel turned back from its inspection point in Nitzana.

"In no rational world could (these) be deemed dual use or any kind of military threat," Van Hollen told CNN weeks after his trip to Egypt's side of the Rafah crossing.

"We learned that when a truck with just one of those items is turned down, the entire truck gets turned around and has to go back to the beginning of the process, which can take weeks," Van Hollen said.

In one instance on February 14, COGAT rejected a truck-load of sleeping bags "because they were the color green, and green means military and according to the 2008 list, military is dual use," the same humanitarian official told CNN.

"No one can argue that sleeping bags are going to win a war," the official said. "We did push back on that and warned them that it would look pretty silly if this got out."

Four sources described another incident when Israel rejected a shipment of dates — a rich source of nutrients desperately needed by a hungry population. Two of the sources said it was because the seeds were picked up as a suspicious object in the x-ray inspection imaging.

Other trucks carrying dates have been allowed into Gaza, according to UN data. But humanitarian workers have said they are worried about a repeat, and several have resorted to pitting dates prior to inspection.

CNN has obtained documents from three major participants in the humanitarian operation that list what they called the "most frequently rejected items". Among them are essential medical supplies: anesthesia machines and anesthetics, crutches, generators, ventilators, x-ray machines, and oxygen cylinders.

The full article first appeared on CNN.



⬆ Thousands of aid trucks are waiting on the Egyptian side of the Rafah border crossing to enter Gaza.
● ALI MOUSTAFA/GETTY IMAGES