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Urbicide the City of Gaza

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Abstract

At 7 October Gaza city is being subjected to genocide as a result of the angry reaction, with most of the victims were children and women. South Africa submit a request to the International Court of Justice in a case entitled "Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel)". Acceptance indicates the validity of the request. Urbicide the city is one of the methods used by the colonial authorities to redesign the urban environment, by demolishing homes, public buildings, infrastructure, hospitals, open spaces and even zoos, which would be a reformulation of the Palestinian narrative from the Israeli perspective. The study methodology is based on analyzing the Urbicide concept . which is done through understanding the phenomena, analyzing them, and comparing them with similar cases. This is done by analyzing some of the military objectives carried out during the war on urban, architectural, historical, governmental and community sites in Gaza. The place was destroyed, the population was dispersed, the features of the city changed, the infrastructure disappeared, and hope became a mere mirage. The extent of the interrelation between the urbicide and genocide is become clear.

Keywords: Gaza; Palestine; genocide; Urbicide; city; occupation; war; architecture.



Figure 1. Aerial photos from Reuters: "How the Israeli bombing made Gaza look like the surface of the moon" November 28, 2023.

Introduction

Urbicide is the destruction of the houses of the attacked tribe, assault and destruction of all their property, or their becoming the property of the powerful, victorious tribe. It is also a historical behavior that has deep roots throughout the origins of humanity and extends deep into history. This barbaric behavior leads us to all kinds of ideas of revenge, genocide, killing, displacement, destruction, erasure, elimination, removal, exclusion, violation and elimination of people by taking away their hopes and lives. All of this is a complete act of genocide that eliminates the hope of survival by destroying the collective memory and leaving no living space, making escape and asylum the only alternative to survival. (*Dorota Golańska, 2023*)

The concept of urbicide ('citycide' meaning urban massacre) was formed and clearly established during the war between Bosnia and Serbia in 1992. Martin Coward, in his book *The Politics of Urban Destruction*, describes the systematic and violent destruction of the city (urbicide); He states that it causes physical, social, political, cultural and civilizational destruction of

the city, such as the destruction of the old Mostar Bridge, which is of great importance for the Bosnian society. (Martin Coward, 2009)

On the morning of October 7, a new phase and era of genocide began, the like of which has not been seen since the Second World War. The death toll in the world's most densely urban area, covering no more than 360 square kilometers, exceeded 35,000, 75,000 people were injured, 20,000 people were missing, (Ministry Of Health, UN OCHA) and more than 65 percent of the buildings in the Gaza Strip were partially or completely destroyed. (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics) In some neighborhoods, 95 percent of the buildings were destroyed. The Gaza Strip consists of five main cities, which include agricultural and industrial areas as well as many neighborhoods, eight camps spread throughout the Strip, and a few villages, whose numbers are decreasing as urbanization increases in the Strip. Gaza's soil is one of the most fertile lands in Palestine and is suitable for agriculture, which is considered one of the main sources of income for the Gaza Strip. Gaza's territory is one of the most fertile lands in Palestine and is suitable for agriculture, which is considered one of the main sources of income for the Gaza Strip. Gaza is one of the cities that border the empires and states that ruled these lands in the past, starting from the Canaanites to the Roman and Ottoman Empires. (Fakher Shriteh, 2014) It has a strategic position today as well as in the past. It is the land mass connecting the Asian and African continents. Gaza City is also located on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, which connects it to the European continent by sea. This location has always exposed it to intense geographical conflict throughout history. It resisted large armies, especially the Mongols and the Crusaders, and its loss caused the Ottoman Empire to collapse, retreat, and downsizing towards Anatolia.

2 million people live in the Gaza Strip and 50 percent of the population consists of children. Gaza society is a vibrant, young and dynamic society. The majority of Gaza's population consists of Palestinian refugees who came from Palestinian cities and villages during the Israeli occupation of Palestine and its war against the Arab armies in the 1948 and 1967 wars. All that remains of them today are the traces and names of the abandoned villages they wanted to return to and regain their property there, based on the United Nations resolutions that "give refugees the right to return to the homes and cities from which they were displaced." (Aruri. N, 2001)



Figure 2. Aerial photos from geomolg show the infrastructure destruction khan- Younis.

This is not the first time that urbicide has occurred to the residents of the Gaza Strip. It has been done effectively and successfully before, in 1948 and 1967. The people who lived here did not return after leaving. There is no trace of them left in the regions they left. Their houses were either demolished or given to new residents, as in Jerusalem and Haifa, or turned into ruins, as in the village of Lifta/Lefte. There are 530 similarly abandoned villages in historical Palestine. (Aruri. N, 2001) The inhabitants of Gaza are refugees from villages surrounding Gaza that are now in Israeli territory. They were resettled in the nearest city in the hope of returning to the lands they had abandoned after the war. However, these hopes have not been realized to date. as shown in the image (Ibrahim Abdel Karim, 2024)

Systematic destruction

The events taking place are a reenactment of events that occurred more than three generations or seventy years ago. The main goal of the practices of killing, destroying, displacing, putting an end to all kinds of life and leaving no space for the protection of living elements in the city is to force the population to leave their lands, villages and cities and migrate to other places. Israel is trying to market this goal on the grounds that there is no longer any suitable place to live in Gaza. It says that this can only be achieved through the clear and systematic destruction of houses and settlements and the elimination of places where people take shelter. (Azzouz, A, 2024) Therefore, the identity that expresses its owners is lost. This causes them to lose their sense of belonging and reluctance to return to a place that has been destroyed and razed to the ground. Likewise, those who watched the footage shot in the Gaza Strip do not believe that this place has paved roads or streets for cars. It was as if this place had been plowed and what remained was sand and soil that could not be walked on and even restricted the movement of the wheel, which was discovered at the beginning of history. Even walking on these roads is

complex and difficult. (Sultany. N , 2024) All of this brings to mind the desire of politicians to return Gaza to prehistory, which they have been expressing from the beginning and wanted to realize. (Ibrahim Abdel Karim, 2024)

In addition, a large part of the areas that make up Gaza City, such as squares, parks, zoos, private and public institutions, municipal and civil defense centers, kindergartens, schools, universities, mosques, markets, health centers and hospitals, were destroyed. It reflects the form of a unified human community through city, village and state. These elements, together with the existence of the population, form these concepts as a whole. Until these disappear, people must be intimidated and displaced. If this happens, there will never be a state or human existence in this place. On the other hand, these goals are completed when the destruction of buildings is added to the murders of 130 thousand dead, injured and missing people, 70 percent of whom are children and women. There are approximately 150,000 partially or completely destroyed in Gaza. (Daniele Palumbo, Paul K, and Erwan R, 2024) Most of these were residences and private properties of vulnerable citizens. Here, human genocide through the killing of city dwellers; Intra-familial genocide is carried out through the killing of houses, and belonging genocide is carried out through the destruction of symbolic structures that connect residents to each other and to place. (Sultany. N , 2024) This leads to the loss of the collective memory that forms over time and strengthens belonging to the place. Accordingly, it will take a long time for Gazans to recover after the war. (Dorota Golańska, 2023)

Urbicide also deepens with the destruction of natural resources. On the one hand, farms and agricultural lands were destroyed by allowing sewage water to circulate, thus polluting groundwater and drinking water, on the other hand, marine treatment plants providing fresh water were also bombed in order to completely cut off the population's drinking water supplies and thus force them to migrate in search of the first basic element, water. The main goal here is to return Gaza to the first human migrations in search of water. This is an indication of the desire to eliminate the urban and civilian aspects of Gaza city and return it to the periods of transfer, nomadism and Bedouinism. This understanding also coincides with the Israeli army's filling of tunnels with sea water in order to sabotage the tunnels and therefore the fertile agricultural lands that characterize Gaza territory. If this happens, the effect of sea water on agricultural lands will not be treated for hundreds of years and the affected lands will become unusable for a long time, As Abdul Rahman Al-Tamimi, director of the Palestinian Hydrologists Group (the largest non-governmental organization working to monitor pollution in the Palestinian territories), told to Anadolu Agency. (Anadolu Ajansi) (Fuad Abu Saif, 2024)

All of these show the systematic, planned and clear urban massacre taking place in the Gaza Strip. From the direct killing of people to the killing of basic needs that provide stability such as housing, shelter and security; It extends to eliminating livelihoods by destroying drinking water resources, agriculture and all sources of order and stability. (Azzouz, A, 2024) The destruction of agricultural lands, the demolition of factories, the elimination of crops and greenhouses lead to the loss of memory, identity, belonging and group ties among members of society. (Fuad Abu Saif, 2024) With the completion of these goals, we will be a fragmented society that wants to migrate and leave individually rather than collectively, and that has the ability to go anywhere if given the opportunity. Thus, the Zionists' desire to evacuate the population in the Gaza Strip and make more room for Jewish settlers will be realized.



Figure 3. compare between before and after the war and how the agricultural land and homes had been destroyed (Geomolge ,2024).

Preparations for this transition began systematically from the first days of the war, using two complementary methods. The first destroyed all houses along the Gaza Strip, focusing on densely populated areas on the one hand, and on buildings in residential areas adjacent to the Israeli border on the other. As can be understood from the statements of the Israeli army that it is trying to create a buffer zone up to 1 km wide on the Gaza border, these buildings were completely and systematically destroyed. Israeli air assets, engineering teams and explosives units did this based on a clear plan to create a buffer zone around the Gaza Strip. As stated by military commanders, this plan aims to implement security objectives that will keep Palestinian fighters away from the borders in the future and encourage settlers living in Israeli settlements adjacent to the Gaza Strip to return to their areas safely without fear of Palestinians seeing their homes. Therefore, all houses and civilian areas belonging to Gazans opposite the Jewish settlements were destroyed, not because it posed any threat, but so that they would not look at the Gaza Strip and remember the events of October 7 and be afraid. One of the Zionist military

commanders makes the following statements regarding Israel's aim to destroy the buildings adjacent to the border: "I want everyone living in Ghilaf Gaza settlements to return to their homes and not see the Shucaiye District in front of them when they open the window facing west. That's why we're here." From these statements, the colonial and genocidal background behind the genocidal activities is clearly understood. (Maher Charif,2024) (*Forensic Architecture* , 2024)



Figure 4. Gaza skyline from the border (Lisa Beyer, 2023).

In parallel with the move initiated by the former Israeli president Peres in the nineties of the last century, with the desire to wake up and not find Gaza, a sustainable theoretical, functional, visionary and future-preparing phase was initiated, which coincided with the desire and demands of the far-right Jews to drop a nuclear bomb on Gaza. These are ideas based on a successful, long-term and proven effective method and methodology to destroy and get rid of Gaza, rooted in Israel's collective memory. Through these, the plan to establish Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip is intended to be implemented. As part of this plan, Israeli settlers and members of extremist organizations have already started talking about restructuring settlements in Gaza. In this context, the first thing to do is to rebuild the settlements that Sharon destroyed in 2005. In addition, six more residential units are planned to be built. In order to implement these, in addition to the work in the six settlements, they began to work on developing and naming a concept that reflects the characteristics of urbicide and aims to fragment the Gaza Strip into isolated islands separated from each other. This is done through Israeli military checkpoints similar to those in the West Bank, an experience that Israeli Interior Minister Ben Gvir praises in all his meetings. This was the main agenda of the conference held with the slogan "Conference on Re-establishing Settlements in the Gaza Strip and Forcing Their Residents to Migrate". Jews cite the settlements spread across the West Bank as an example of the success of their security policies aimed at protecting Israel. (Ibrahim Abdel Karim, 2024) According to them, the same settlements must be established in Gaza to ensure Israel's security. Daniela Weiss, an activist living in West Bank settlements and one of the conference organizers, says: "Gaza City will be Jewish... We established serious teams and collected donations. We will follow more or less the same path. We will apply the same strategy we used in Judea and Samaria. First we will show up in military camps, then we will move forward step by step... "We will build a Jewish city in the city of Khan Yunus and name it Hânût Yûnâ." (Maher Charif,2024)

Thus, in the post-war period, preparations are emerging for the re-establishment of control over the Gaza Strip, whose original inhabitants were separated, isolated, blocked, expelled from their lands and made unable to live there naturally and humanely by preventing displaced residents from returning to their homes, bringing new residents to new cities to be built and rebuild the Gaza Strip according to the needs and desires of the Jewish population. (Azzouz, A, 2024)

Israel's measures during the war are concerned with restructuring the city and its population and reshaping the urban and spatial space of Gaza in a way that facilitates its continued containment with minimal effort and minimal military and field costs. This is seen as the most effective method of controlling the population and resistance in Gaza. (Sultany. N , 2024) In his report published on March 7, more than five months after the start of the war, Eyal Weizman clearly refers to the gradual division of the Israeli army in the Gaza Strip. He started by dividing the Gaza Strip into two parts, the north and south of the Gaza Valley. Later, he divided the north into Northern Gaza and Gaza City, and the south into three parts: Deir al-Balah, Khan Younis and Rafah. He created safe and unsafe areas within these sections. He sent messages to residents of the area to evacuate their area and move to safer areas that were bombed less frequently. In the third phase of the division, the Israeli army took advantage of the temporary cessation of the war during the prisoner exchange with the Hamas movement and divided the Gaza Strip into 623 blocks and numbers resembling basins. He then began strangely telling the residents that they needed to move from one number to another. Since the residents of the neighborhood did not have internet and did not know the number of the zone assigned to them by the Israeli army's engineering units according to the combat division (see the figure below), the people of Gaza faced various obstacles during this transfer, creating a feeling of surprise, confusion and fear. They began to think that they were being targeted because they could not access the map in the absence of electricity and internet. When they had electricity and internet, they needed experts with knowledge of plans, zoning and maps to help them. Because these are complex maps that are difficult to understand and require a certain level of training to move from one threatened place to another with less threat. Since the entire Gaza Strip is insecure, it is seen that planners and architects play an active role in the urbicide process experienced here through planning, management, orientation, division, spatial distribution and urban landscape sharing. However, they never had such a role. Instead of realizing comfort,

luxury, participation, communication and membership in communities, they clung to ideology, wars and their means. (*Forensic Architecture*, 2024)

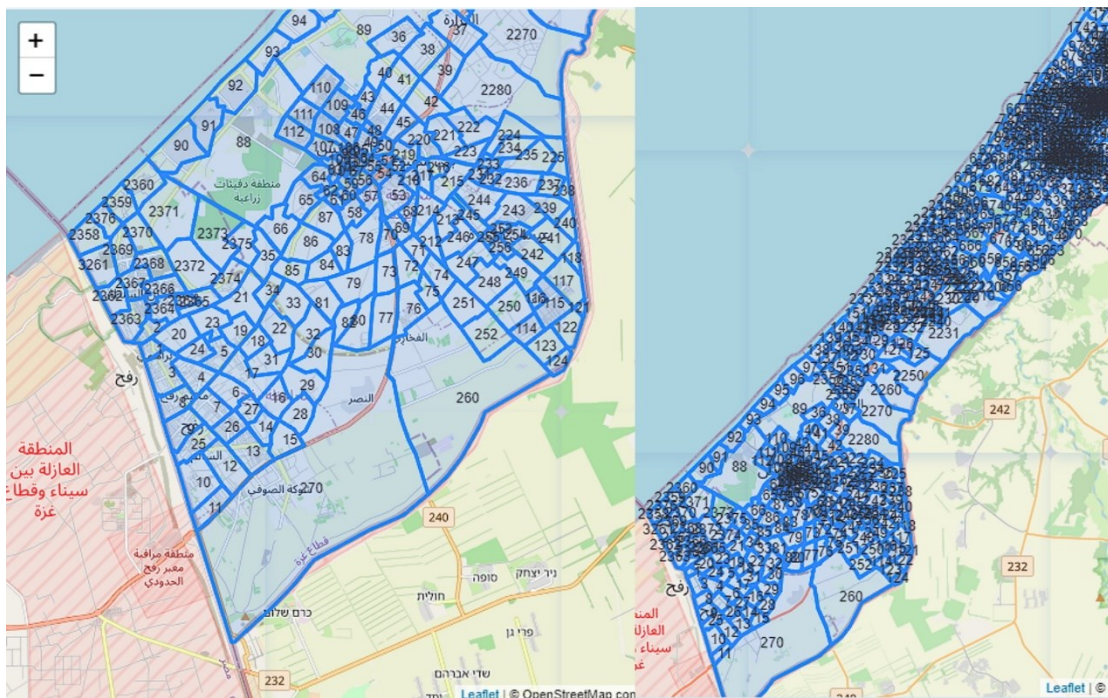


Figure 5. Gaza strip map with numbered blocks published by the Israeli military on 1 December 2023 to mark areas in Gaza instructed to evacuate. (Screenshot) (*Forensic Architecture*, 2024)

Destruction of Houses – Domicide

Building bombings in the Gaza Strip are carried out on a large scale, without oversight or accountability. The rate of collapsed buildings reached 80 percent in some regions. See the table below. Some neighborhoods and regions were completely destroyed and became unusable. This shows the form and volume of genocide committed by this operation. (*Forensic Architecture*, 2024) Destruction is carried out by bombs of all types and sizes. The weight of some bombs reaches one ton, in some cases causing the formation of pits in the ground reaching 15 meters deep, with the aim of destroying the tunnels and structures allegedly located under these buildings. Smart and unguided bombs were also used to destroy the targets. The rate of unguided bombs reached 40 percent. This means random, desultory and aimless destruction without any clear goal. As we have explained before, the fact that 70 percent of the frightening numbers of martyrs were children and women reveals that the purpose here is nothing but extirpation and destruction. Army and field commanders try to justify this by saying that most of the civilians killed were relatives of Palestinian fighters, and therefore these fighters should be held responsible for the killing of their relatives, including women and children. However, there is no justification under international law for attacking innocent people, even if they are in close contact with the wanted persons. This doesn't justify killing them either. Because no person's guilt/sin can be attributed to another person. (*Ibrahim Abdel Karim*, 2024) This approach reveals the ideological social role targeted by genocide. Because the occupying regime is trying to destroy the collective memory of Gazans by destroying everything that connects them to place, from their homes to their relatives and friends. The disappearance of memories and people in a place makes that place completely meaningless. (*Azzouz, A*, 2024) As a matter of fact, many residents said that when they returned to the areas where they were displaced during the war or to their destroyed homes, especially during the temporary ceasefire, they barely recognized their homes and regions and could not even imagine the future that awaited them in that destroyed place and they expressed concern about what future awaited them after the war, including the development and reconstruction of these neighborhoods. Gaza's master plan for zoning and reconstruction needs to be prepared with local efforts and public participation, not by external forces. If this plan is prepared under the influence of external powers, it will lead to a planned and directed social genocide that may have more disastrous consequences than those experienced during the war, which is undesirable. (*Ibrahim Abdel Karim*, 2024)

Shelter/Asylum and Tents

Rafah City, whose population does not exceed 270 thousand people, accepted more than one million refugees who were displaced during this war and came from the center and north of Gaza. Thus, tents appeared en masse in Rafah, the region where the Israeli army directed the Gazans and located on the Egyptian border. Everyone who observes the situation notices

that there is a serious increase in the number of refugees in the city. As seen in the picture below, tents were spread everywhere, especially in areas affiliated with the United Nations. (Becky Sullivan, Anas B & Abu Bakr B, 2024).

UNRWA Spokesperson Julia Tohme puts this situation in the following words: "You look outside the window of one of our facilities, and all I could see was the sea of these makeshift structures".

This statement reflects the density of refugees in Rafah, and many problems arose in services due to this density. There is no infrastructure in the region to serve such a large number of refugees. As one refugee noted, "There is no water here and toilets are another source of distress." This refugee also said that "Garbage is also a problem, it is accepted as one of the basics of life, and it is an issue that human beings have realized its importance for survival since the beginning of history and approached it correctly. (Becky Sullivan, Anas B & Abu Bakr B, 2024).



Figure 7. Images of the area where tents were set up in the area adjacent to the United Nations headquarters during a forty-day period from December 03 to January. (Becky Sullivan, Anas B & Abu Bakr B, 2024).

Institutional Destruction as a Tool of Urbicide

Due to bad conditions, migration and shelter were not limited to tents/camps. Some refugees took shelter in collapsed buildings. From the perspective of displaced people, this is the safest place. Since it is thought to have ceased to be a target because it has been bombed by the occupying Israelis before, it is safe and it is illogical to bomb it again. While this theory brought successful results in many cases, unfortunately it cost the lives of some refugees who continued to live in the north. Many of them took shelter in the destroyed Shifa Hospital, under the pretext that it had previously been the command center of Hamas. After the Israeli army evacuated, destroyed and withdrew in January, many refugees returned to the hospital to protect themselves. Since this place was extensively ransacked and destroyed, there was no need for the Israelis to return there again. Because they achieved their goals for this place, they made sure it was not a military area and they blew up the sections they wanted. Despite this, the Israelis returned on March 17 and bombed the hospital building and its surroundings again, making it unable to accept refugees again. This situation shows the failure of the previously mentioned and unproven theory that "what is destroyed becomes safer". Therefore, there is no safe place left that the Israeli army has entered or has not entered, whether it is civilian or international, whether it has been bombed before or not. (UN News)



Figure 8. left picture : Presence of the occupation army and military equipment in the schoolyard (EMANUEL FABIAN, 2023) **right picture** Al- Şifa Hospital was completely destroyed and turned into a pile of rubble after it was bombed for the second time (UN News)

Use the public buildings as military command centers of the Israeli army in war.

Israeli Researcher Emmanuel Fabian, in his interview published in November 2023, pointed out that a school in Al-Shati Refugee Camp was converted into a military barracks. So much so that in the garden of this school, there are tanks and vehicles carrying soldiers instead of students. The classrooms were converted into sleeping rooms for soldiers and rooms for

command, surveillance and monitoring of events in the field. Additionally, a place has been allocated as a synagogue for soldiers to perform their religious duties and pray. See the photo below. (EMANUEL FABIAN, 2023)

It is seen that high buildings are used to achieve the goals. Here, according to international law, it is not right for the parties to the conflict to target public buildings, nest in them or use them as shelter. Because it exposes civilians and safe people living here to danger by making it vulnerable to attacks by other parties. Thus, there is no safe place left in the Gaza Strip and every place becomes open to bombing, attack and therefore destruction. This was the situation in hundreds of schools, mosques and dozens of hospitals serving in the Gaza Strip and serving as shelter centers for those displaced from their homes in the first days of the war.

Places of worship, which are internationally recognized as prohibited places and should not be attacked according to United Nations laws, were also destroyed. It is estimated that approximately 530 mosques were completely or partially destroyed, indicating the extent of destruction affecting the Gaza Strip. (See picture below) However, after the mosques were bombed, citizens cleared the rubble and prayed next to the mosques to resist this urban genocide that extended to religious buildings. (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics)

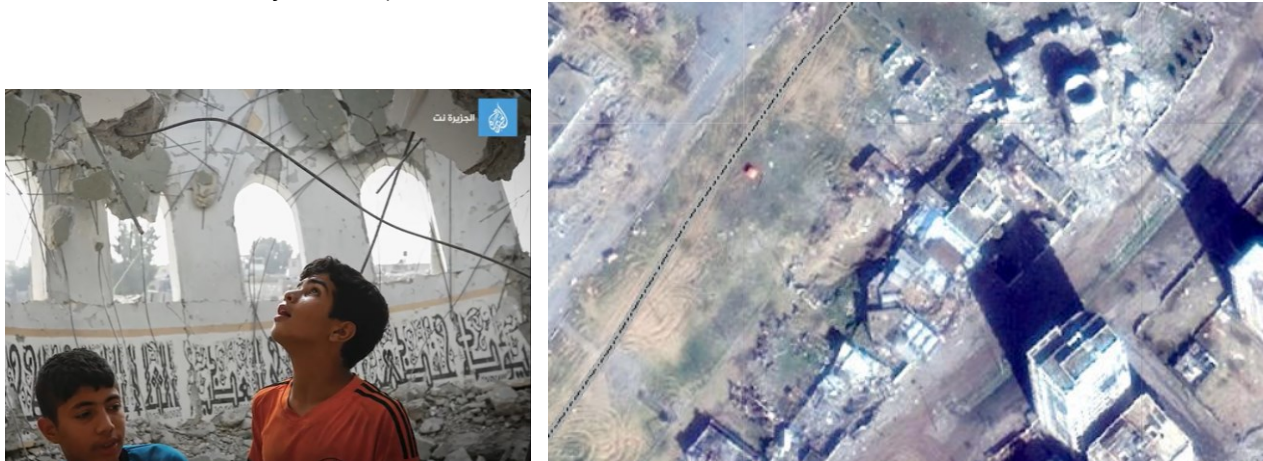


Figure 9. The picture on the right is from (Geomolge ,2024) and shows the destruction of mosques. The picture on the left is from El Araby TV and shows citizens praying on the mosque ruins.

The Road as a Tool of Urbicide

Two main roads connecting the northern and southern regions were cut. Salahaddin and al-Rashid Streets are considered the two main arteries connecting the Gaza Strip from north to south, and cutting these roads restricts the movement of residents and exposes the region to pressure and control. As a matter of fact, many deaths and injuries occurred on these roads. Likewise, the rest of the streets and roads within the city have also become traps for residents. As seen in the photographs leaked from Israeli drones and the evidence presented to the international court, every object moving on these roads is a potential and legitimate target for the Israeli army. Thus, these public and open spaces, where the sense of trust, communication, solidarity, movement and safe circulation should be free in the city and human thought, have become the most dangerous places for the public in times of war and bombardment. Even on the safe routes declared by the Israeli army, the roadsides were full of human corpses. Among them were children, women, men and the elderly. Moreover, the road tracks did not remain the same. Because the occupation army is deliberately destroying the infrastructure in Gaza in an effort to return it to the Stone Age, as can be seen from the many small areas that are not very busy. As seen in the image below, an aerial photo shows many northern residents exiting to the safe corridor declared by the occupation army. Checkpoints were set up, arrests were made and families, women and children were killed on this safe road. . (Forensic Architecture , 2024)



Figure 10. at the Left: Aerial view of the checkpoint on Salah al-Din Street. At the midel and the right show the new road 749 satellite views by BBC (Abdirahim Saeed and others,2024)

The use of roads as a tool of war and conflict, the continuation of this war and the expansion of control over the Gaza Strip are better understood with the construction of the road known as Route 749, which extends from the Israeli border to the Mediterranean and divides the Gaza Strip into two regions, northern and southern. This street/road was raised five meters above the ground and cut off the arterial connection between the north and south, especially Salahaddin and al-Rashid Streets. For this reason, all the houses and lands in the area where the road passes were destroyed. This road was created by the occupying soldiers so that tanks and military equipment could move forward safely, easily and quickly. In addition, this road aims to separate the north of the Gaza Strip from the south, and to prevent the Palestinian people from moving freely and smoothly and returning to their homes in the north after the end of the military operation in the north. However, this inhibited right is a right guaranteed by human rights and international laws, and accordingly, no one has the right to force any party to migrate. Thanks to the map below showing this new road and its route, published by the BBC, it is clear that the road is new, has not existed before, serves the open uricide efforts in the Gaza Strip, and is an invention of Israeli army planners and engineers. (Abdirahim Saeed and others,2024)

In response to the unjust destruction of infrastructure and paved roads in the Gaza Strip, many residents have resorted to primitive methods of transportation. They started using donkeys and horses, which do not need the fuel banned from entering Gaza and can drive on destroyed roads that modern cars cannot travel. (NAJIB JOBAIN, 2023) As a result, the people of Gaza saw a return to the basic elements and basic principles of civilization, whether in terms of movement, nutrition or even shelter, as a safe solution. Thus, it returned to the basic source of civilization, aiming to maintain communication with the remaining members of the urban group to which it was affiliated and of which it was one of the elements.



Figure 11. Gazian people using the donkies in transportation (NAJIB JOBAIN, 2023).

Gaza reacts and resists urban genocide

Crimes do not happen as their perpetrators wish. The victim must resist and react to every measure taken against him. This is also the case with the crimes committed in Gaza. We see that there is a reaction of the people of Gaza in all the events we mentioned before. It is true that events such as killing, destruction, and displacement are more powerful than a person's direct and immediate negative reaction to them. However, subsequent actions include refusing to continue the displacement and wanting to return to the old settlement. The creation of the houses, neighborhoods, villages and camps they left in a way that preserved social ties was an attempt to preserve the spirit of community and collective memory, which required preserving the memory of individuals and society before the war. In this section, we will examine some of the reactions of Gaza society to the genocide in cities and homes and how they resisted. We will also try to study this phenomenon, which can be developed to provide future prevention elements for any city in the world and then applied to ordinary cities. In this context, we will point out that some of the measures taken by Gazans are individual, random and unorganized; and some of them are the result of the experiences they gained from the three wars they faced in the twenty-first century before the start of the last war.

In order to strengthen their ties to the land and their resistance to the displacement and destruction they face along the Gaza Strip, residents are trying to stay on their land, albeit in temporary buildings, and endure all the difficulties of adapting to post-war life. This is clearly seen in the tents, which have been considered humanity's first shelter after caves throughout history, and in other buildings where local residents tried to take shelter. Residents of the region came here from the first day after the schools and international organizations were filled with refugees and took shelter in tents adjacent to these institutions, which are considered safe areas according to international law. People thought they would be safer here. However, Israel threatened to bomb some schools and shelter centers affiliated with UNRWA and asked people to evacuate. Thereupon, some families returned to the rubble of their houses, which they thought would not be bombed again because they had been targeted before, and started living in the tents they set up there. Each family pitched a tent over its house. (Figure 12).



Figure 12. According to photographer Ayman Amriti, pitching a tent on the rubble of a house is a sign of survival, determination and belonging to that place. And the others Although these photos reflect details of debris and destruction, they express the residents' determination and effort to create a collective memory.

Regardless of the circumstances, manifestations of survival, determination and life emerge through many daily actions. We see that some people return to their homes and use the opportunities there, while others try to live their normal lives and earn a living. Families are trying to continue their daily habits and lives under these difficult conditions. As seen in the picture below, birthdays are celebrated on the rubble of houses, while others prepare food, bath, lie down and perform actions that confirm the efforts of the people of Gaza to resist this urban genocide. (See pictures below). One of the best examples showing the resistance of the people of the region is Besme Shehla from Gaza, who cleaned her ruined house and restored it to make it ready for living again and took care of the house plants she had previously cared for.

In addition, the collective life of Gazans continues not only as individuals, but also in groups, starting from the smallest and the largest family, to the children of the family, passing through the neighborhood and the local people, until they belong to the city. As Amin Maalouf describes, all of these loyalties are important and manifest in Gazans' relationships with each other. This situation deepened further during the month of Ramadan, which the people of Gaza had a difficult time with, but they were able to live together as members of a single tribe and group, as can be seen from the collective iftar served on the ruins of the building in the picture below. We see this in the mass iftar dinners, which are one of the most important Ramadan traditions of Gaza and strengthen social relations, emphasizing that everyone is a brother and a family, that there is no difference between rich and poor, on the contrary, they are all the same. We see an example of a similar solidarity in the two pictures below; The picture on the left shows the cooperation of local residents in clearing the Shujaiya neighborhood on the northern side of the Gaza Strip, which was one of the first areas bombed at the beginning of the war, as pointed out by Nur Naim, one of Gaza's influential figures.



Figure 13. Ramadan Iftar photo by photographer Mahmud Accur on the ruins of the neighborhoods destroyed by the occupation

Conclusion

Buildings were destroyed and razed to the ground, their remains scattered everywhere. Parks and playgrounds were also destroyed in most of the neighborhoods that were forced to migrate and destroyed under the bombings in Gaza. Those living here were not given additional time, and no distinction was made between residential areas and other areas. Every inch of Gaza that has not yet been bombed is under threat. Despite all these threats and fear, we see that the residents of the region do not leave the Gaza Strip and their region. They are going to less dangerous areas. Some families are seen moving 12 times in six months while looking for shelter. When a place is bombed, some of the family, relatives and neighbors

living there are injured. Then people run away in terror and fear and take shelter elsewhere. However, they find in front of them the very thing they feared and ran away from. (Azzouz, A, 2024)

In the face of all this terror, destruction, human, urban and cultural extinction, the residents of the region resorted to a different method that could be successful. They returned to nature and its essential sustainable resources, which do not require unsustainable energy such as oil and gas. Thus, they were able to survive, sustain their lives, and resist displacement and destruction by resisting displacement and genocide, which increased self-sufficiency and reduced dependence on others. They resorted to animal-drawn carts, which were no longer used as a means of destruction and allowed them to move on roads. But the people of Gaza compensated for this with a simple but effective and useful tool that ensured continuity. In his article published in the Washington Post on October 6, 2023, the day before the war, journalist Steve Hendrix drew attention to the essential role of donkeys as an animal pulling carts and the increase in donkey prices due to the embargo on Gaza. The emergence of donkeys as a means of transportation led Israel to limit the import of donkeys from outside Gaza and to seek to put pressure on the people of Gaza as a tool of the siege of Gaza at the time. All of this happened on the eve of war.

The experience of dealing with means of transportation, how to cope with and resist events is one of many experiences that influence the rest of the urban elements that the research briefly and simply touches upon. The realization of the reality of the genocide experienced by Gaza through the architectural and planning dimension of the urban genocide has been clearly demonstrated, as we have explained before. Other studies and research touching on the subject also reinforce this. This situation has different aspects, as seen in the architectural research presented in Eyal Weizman's report in response to Israel's report to the International Court. (*Forensic Architecture*, 2024) In his report, Weizman points out that Israel does not offer any humanitarian conditions to refugees before, during and after leaving their place of residence. At the time of writing this article, the threat of attack on Refah, where the residents of the region had previously been directed as a safe shelter, stands out as one of the points that most strongly confirms the idea of urban genocide.

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Conflict of Interests

The Author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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