

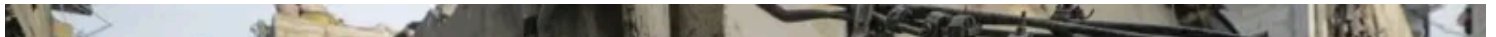
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Human Rights Watch accuses Israel of acts of genocide in Gaza over water access

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HRW accused Israel of deliberately damaging water infrastructure

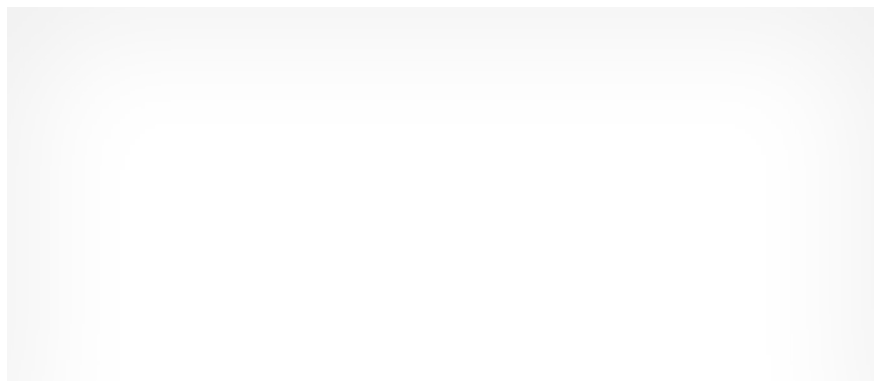
Human Rights Watch has accused Israel of committing "acts of genocide" in Gaza by deliberately depriving Palestinian civilians there of adequate access to water.

It says Israel's actions include intentionally damaging water and sanitation infrastructure.

The campaign group says this has probably caused thousands of deaths, which it says is also tantamount to "committing the crime against humanity of extermination".

Israel rejected HRW's report as "propaganda".

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In a post on X, the Israeli foreign ministry's spokesman said the group was "once more spreading its blood libels... The truth is the complete opposite of HRW's lies".

The 179-page report says that "since October 2023, Israeli authorities have deliberately obstructed Palestinians' access to the adequate amount of water required for survival in the Gaza Strip".

It says Israel intentionally damaged infrastructure, including solar panels powering treatment plants, a reservoir, and a spare parts warehouse, while also blocking fuel for generators.

It says Israel also cut electricity supplies, attacked repair workers and blocked the entry into Gaza of repair materials.

"This isn't just negligence," said HRW executive director Tirana Hassan. "It is a calculated policy of deprivation that has led to the deaths of thousands from dehydration and disease that is nothing short of the crime against humanity of extermination, and an act of genocide."

The report is based on interviews with dozens of Palestinians from Gaza, including water authority officials, sanitation experts and healthcare workers, as well as satellite imagery and data from October 2023 to September 2024.

Israel launched a major military offensive in Gaza after Hamas attacked Israel on 7 October 2023, killing about 1,200 people and taking 251 others hostage.

At least 45,129 people have been killed in Gaza since the offensive began, according to the territory's Hamas-run health ministry. It does not put a figure on the number who have died as a result of lack of access to water or other such causes.

The HRW report notes that to constitute the crime of genocide, alleged actions require evidence of intent. It says the findings, including statements made by senior Israeli officials, "may indicate such intent".

But, rejecting HRW's allegations on X, Israeli foreign ministry spokesman Oren Marmorstein said Israel had facilitated "the continuous flow of water and humanitarian aid into Gaza, despite operating under constant attacks of Hamas terror organisation".

He said water pipelines and pumping and desalination facilities remained operational, and that water tankers had repeatedly delivered supplies into Gaza through Israeli

crossings.

"This report is full of lies that are appalling even when compared to HRW's already low standards," he added.

The HRW report is the latest in a series of accusations by rights groups and others that Israel is committing genocide in its campaign in Gaza.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) - the UN's top court - is also currently examining a case brought by South Africa accusing Israel of genocide.

The Genocide Convention of 1948, passed in the wake of the Nazi Holocaust of European Jewry, defines genocide as "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group".

Israel has vehemently denied such allegations as "wholly unfounded" and driven by antisemitism. It says it has not intentionally harmed civilians in Gaza, and that it is fighting only against Hamas.

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