

REALISING THE CAPACITY OF THE INTERNAL FRONT – CASE OF GAZA 2024

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Abstract

This paper explores the impact of Israel's actions on Internal Front landscape of Gaza following the events of October 7, 2023. It begins by examining Israel's initial decisions to cut off essential supplies to Gaza, including food, water, and electricity, as part of collective punitive measures against the civilian population. The systematic destruction of critical infrastructure, such as bakeries, desalination plants, and energy sources, further exacerbated the humanitarian crisis. The paper provides a detailed analysis of the socio-economic conditions in Gaza prior to October 7, 2023, emphasizing the already dire state of poverty and food insecurity exacerbated by an 18-year-long siege. The blockade has severely restricted Gaza's ability to import and export goods, stifling economic development and leading to extreme poverty and unemployment. The movement of people, whether for medical treatment, trade, or other purposes, has been heavily restricted, further contributing to the economic and social degradation of the region. The case study presented in this paper reviews the observations of the internal front of Gaza since October 7th, 2023, highlighting the importance of maintaining resilience and security within the region amidst the ongoing conflict. The challenges faced by Gaza's home front, including the disruption of economic activities, the looting of aid, and the psychological warfare waged by the Israeli occupation, are discussed in depth. The study concludes by emphasizing the need for a coordinated effort among local, national, and international actors to support Gaza's recovery while maintaining its internal front. The role of various factions, families, and institutions in either contributing to or mitigating the challenges faced by the Gaza home front is also critically examined.

Keywords: War on Gaza, Food Insecurity, Home Front Resilience, Psychological Warfare, Human Rights in Gaza.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Early Decisions by the Occupation to Shack the Gaza Home Front

Directly after the 7th of October 2023, Israel announced its decision to cut off food, water and electricity supplies to the Gaza Strip as part of a series of collective punitive measures targeting approximately 2.5 million civilians. Israel did not stop there, but began taking measures that included bombing and destroying bakeries, desalination plants and renewable energy sources, in addition to destroying residential buildings, roads, towers, shops and factories. Israel also forced residents of Gaza City and the northern Gaza Strip to move to areas south of the Gaza Valley, claiming that these were safe zone areas. All these what were supposed to be safe zone areas were pursued after a few hours and days with the systematic bombing of facilities, institutions, homes and towers in those areas to which they were forced to move.

1.2 Description of the Socioeconomic Status of Gaza Before October 7th, 2023

These systematic collective punitive measures led to the destruction of the modest food and water stocks available in the private sector, and prevented its replenishment, which created a serious humanitarian, environmental and health tragedy. When it comes to socioeconomic status, the Palestinians in Gaza have nothing to lose, as the

poverty rate has exceeded 80% according to UNRWA statistics in August 2023, and the rate of extreme poverty, including food insecurity, has increased by 60%, according to the same source. This resulted from the most severe siege in the world on Palestine, especially the Gaza Strip, an economic and financial siege, a siege on movement and trade, and a siege on travel for treatment or tourism. Hassoun et. al (2024)



Figure (1): Showing the Role of UNRWA in the Sustaining the Minimum Socioeconomic Life of Gaza

Ref: Pronczuk and Peres-Pena (2024)

The economic and commercial siege has made it impossible for Palestinians to import and export freely, so the import and export process has become completely dependent on Israeli approvals, which have placed hundreds of restrictions on imports, preventing most imports that stimulate industry, agriculture, fishing, and the construction sector under the pretext of dual use of these goods, including construction iron, cement, pipes, and internet cables, in addition to raw materials needed for industry or fertilizers and medicines for agriculture. The financial and monetary siege was imposed by restricting banks not dealing with many Palestinian banks and preventing them from foreign transactions. The occupation also deprived the Palestinian Authority of the right to issue the Palestinian currency, which led to the continued suffering of the Palestinians from the liquidity problem, the change problem, and the foreign exchange problem, which the Palestinians, especially in Gaza, were suffering from constantly, especially on occasions such as holidays, Ramadan, the start of school, and others.

As for movement and travel, whether for treatment, trade, or tourism, the occupation restricted this for the Palestinians, especially in Gaza. The people of Gaza went through several stages regarding the difficulty of travel, sometimes reaching its absence for months for all categories, and when it was allowed, the person wishing to travel waits for many months until his turn arrives to allow travel until he pays thousands of dollars to allow travel for the person and the family, reaching 50 thousand dollars, in addition to preventing tens of thousands of Palestinians from travelling completely, not only through the Erez crossing, but also through the Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt. The restrictions on the travel of patients and the injured to receive treatment abroad also appeared, as we often find Israeli refusal and restrictions on their travel, which leads to the indirect killing of patients due to the lack

of appropriate treatments and medical devices, especially for cancer and chronic diseases. Even in the event of no refusal, the patient waits a long, unspecified queue that extends for months until his turn comes to be allowed to leave.

The observation from the ground shows that dozens of families paid no less than \$50,000 just to leave Gaza for Egypt through the Rafah crossing. This amount is paid to more than one independent entity that carries out what is called coordination, the most important of which is the Hala Company, in addition to the coordination of the Egyptian Foreign Ministry. The Sabah al-Din crossing is viewed as a Palestinian-Egyptian crossing, and it is officially so. However, the ongoing Israeli interventions have made the crossing a large prison and a major extortion station for the Palestinians, whether as a passenger crossing or transporting goods, which has led to the absorption of Palestinian liquidity unfairly and unacceptably in any way through bribes and exaggerated fees of dozens of times for transportation and specifying the turn for trucks, in addition to obstruction, delay, paying floors instead of waiting and other things.



Figure (2): Rafah Crossing Restrictions and Challenges

Courtesy: Ahram Online (2023)

The matter did not stop at this point, but rather went beyond direct killing by bullets and through the bombing of homes, buildings, vehicles, and safe people in markets and roads, where thousands of Palestinians were killed before October 7, 2023. This is in addition to the policy of humiliation and domination practised by the Israeli occupation on the Palestinians and Palestinian leaders in general. This is in addition to the ongoing attacks on the Palestinian people in Jerusalem, Al-Aqsa Mosque, and other areas of the West Bank, which made normal life almost impossible, and they suffered from the fragmentation between one road to another, which increased the difficulty of getting from one place to another. Besides all of the above, along with the Palestinians' frustration with any political solution, Israel's procrastination in implementing the two-state solution, and even the categorical rejection of the two-state solution by many Israeli officials, all of this and more contributed to the Palestinians' initiative in the events of October 7, 2023.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Review of the Geneva Convention and the Right of Protection of Individuals and Institutions

God has honoured humans, and this is mentioned in many religions, besides they are fully consistent with international humanitarian law, which stipulates that civilians under the control of hostile forces must be treated humanely in all circumstances, without any harmful discrimination. They must be protected against all forms of violence and degrading treatment, including murder and torture. If tried, they also have the right to a fair trial that provides them with all basic judicial guarantees. Buheji and Mushimiyimana (2023b)

The Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949 provides in Part I Article 3 of the General Provisions that in the case of armed conflict not of an international character occurring in the territory of one of the High Contracting Parties, each Party to the conflict shall be bound to apply, as a minimum, the following provisions:

1. Persons taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of armed forces who have laid down their arms and those placed hors de combat by sickness, wounds, detention, or any other cause, shall in all circumstances be treated humanely, without any adverse distinction founded on race, colour, religion or faith, sex, birth or wealth, or any other similar criteria. To this end, the following acts are and shall remain prohibited at any time and in any place whatsoever with respect to the above-mentioned persons:
 - a) Violence to life and person, in particular, murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture;
 - b) Taking of hostages;
 - c) Outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment;
 - d) Passing sentences and carrying out executions without previous judgment pronounced by a regularly constituted court, affording all the judicial guarantees recognized as indispensable by civilized peoples.
2. The wounded and sick shall be collected and cared for. An impartial humanitarian body, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, may offer its services to the Parties to the conflict.

The Parties to the conflict shall further endeavour to bring into force, by particular agreements, all or part of the other provisions of the present Convention.

Article 4 also indicates that persons protected by the Convention are those who, at a given moment and in any manner whatsoever, find themselves, in case of a conflict or occupation, in the hands of a Party to the conflict or Occupying Power of which they are not nationals.

Protected persons under Article 8 may in no circumstances renounce in part or in entirety the rights granted to them by the present Convention and by the special agreements referred to in the preceding Article, if such exist. Civilian hospitals organized to care for the wounded, sick, and infirm and maternity cases may not be attacked.

The Parties to the conflict shall always respect and protect them, Article (18). No protected person may be punished for an offence he or she has not personally committed. Collective penalties and all measures of intimidation or terrorism are prohibited. Reprisals against protected persons and their property are also prohibited, Article (33).

Upon reviewing the above laws, we find that the Israeli occupation state has not observed any of its provisions and has violated the rights of the Palestinians in Gaza in a flagrant and blatant violation that requires the formation of legal committees to document it, with sincere thanks to the State of South Africa, which filed an international case against the occupying state before the International Criminal Court.

3.0 CASE STUDY ON GAZA'S INTERNAL FRONT

3.1 Realising the Importance of Protecting the Gaza Home Front in Times of War

In the Gaza Strip, during this War that started in October 2023, the importance of preserving the home front became apparent, to support the patience and steadfastness of its people, and to work to spread a state of stability and a sense of security, and to provide the requirements of and resilience that lead to steadfastness, such as the provision of food, water, clothing, gas, security and justice. The importance of preserving the home front became clear after the people of the Gaza Strip felt a complete loss of security and justice, and the lack of availability of water, energy, food, and other things. Buheji (2024a), Migdad and Buheji (2024b), Buheji and Mushimiyimana (2023a)

3.2 The Reality of the Home Front before October 7th

3.2.1 General view of the Socioeconomic Status of Gaza's Home Front before 2023 War

Before the war of October 2023, Gaza suffered from a stifling siege that lasted for 18 years after Hamas won the elections and exercised its rule over Gaza. The continuation of the siege led to a significant exacerbation of humanitarian crises, as poverty rates and dependence on aid reached 80% with high rates of food insecurity and the availability of goods necessary for civil and economic life.

By tracking data issued by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics from 2006 to 2022, the per capita share of the gross domestic product in 2021 amounted to about \$1,213.4 in Gaza, which is equal to a quarter of the per capita share of the gross domestic product in the West Bank (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2022a) & (Palestine Monetary Authority, 2022).

The figures show a significant disparity in the unemployment rate between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, as the unemployment rate in the first quarter of 2022 reached about 25.4%, with 46.6% in the Gaza Strip compared to 13.9% in the West Bank, meaning that unemployment rates in the Gaza Strip are about three times higher than in the West Bank (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2022b). The unemployment rate among Gaza youth reached 60%, which shows the difficulty of the youth's economic situation, which greatly affected the psychological and social aspects, as spinsterhood rates increased and the average age for marriage increased significantly, besides many psychological illnesses, introversion, and indifference spread.

3.2.2 Poverty in Gaza Before War 2023

According to monthly consumption patterns, the poverty rate among individuals in Palestine before October, 2023 reached 29%, with 14% in the West Bank and 53% in the Gaza Strip (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2018). World Bank data indicate that the poverty rate in the Gaza Strip reached 60% in 2022 (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2022). It also showed that about 17% of individuals in Palestine suffered from extreme poverty according to monthly consumption patterns, with 6% in the West Bank and 34% in the Gaza Strip.

The poverty line in Palestine for a family of five is 2,470 shekels (\$765), and the extreme poverty line is 1,974 shekels (\$611). Extreme poverty refers to the level of consumption of basic needs, such as food, drink, clothing, and housing, according to data from the Household Expenditure and Consumption Survey. PCBS (2023)

3.2.3 Food Security Before War 2023

The 2020 Socio-Economic and Food Security Survey (SEFSec) results indicate that during 2020, the number of food-secure Palestinian households was less than half the number of Palestinian households, with vast differences between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. While 60% of West Bank households were food-secure, 60% of households in the Gaza Strip suffered from moderate or severe food insecurity, Palestinian Economic Policy Research Institute (2020). The total number of Palestinian workers in "Israel" in mid-2022 reached about 203,400 workers, constituting 25% of the workforce in the West Bank, and contributing about 15% of the Palestinian national product, of whom about 101,700 workers hold work permits, 43,500 workers without a work permit, and 57,200 workers hold Jerusalemite identity cards, while the Gaza Strip was deprived of this labor from 2006 until 2021. The year 2022 witnessed about 14,300 job seekers in Gaza obtaining work permits in "Israel" within what was called economic facilities within an undeclared agreement between the Gaza factions and the State of "Israel" with Egyptian-Qatari international mediation following the May 2021 aggression. The annual amount of labor brought into the Palestinian market in "Israel" is estimated at \$3.4 to \$3.8 billion. (Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute, 2022)

3.2.4 Transport and Travelling Before War 2023

Gaza residents suffer from great difficulties in traveling, as the crossings are either closed or Palestinians are not allowed to travel except with Israeli approval or they need to pay a large sum of money as travel coordination, amounting to thousands of dollars to the Egyptian side. All of this makes life difficult for the Palestinian residents of the Gaza Strip, making their lives and deaths the same.

3.2.5 Security and Safety in Gaza Before War 2023

Despite all the above sources of instability, the Gaza Strip before War 2023 enjoyed a relative spread of security. Everyone was safe in their lives, businesses and money in general. On the other hand, Gaza has experienced a distinctive state of great security stability, as the Gazan citizen feels completely safe in his life, businesses, and money. Gaza enjoyed the services of the local police who were doing their duty to the fullest. In addition, the ongoing cooperation between the police and the community reform leaders has increased the state of security and the continuous and rapid treatment of problems, preventing their exacerbation and contributing to supporting stability on the internal front in the Gaza Strip.

3.2.6 Describing the Deliberate Impoverishment and Looting of Gaza's Liquidity-Status before October 2023

The deliberate impoverishment of the Gaza Strip and the looting of liquidity by the occupation and the neighbourhood. The Gaza Strip has been exposed to a state of deliberate and systematic impoverishment and a state of looting of liquidity and drowning it in problems related to the lack of liquidity necessary for life.

One of the most important factors of impoverishment is the systematic and deliberate Israeli blockade that allows the entry of goods only according to Israeli approvals, which allow entry according to the logic of the proverb (eat and do not die), meaning providing the minimum for life calculated by the number of calories necessary for human life without excess. This is in addition to preventing most goods and primary raw materials necessary for industry, agriculture, tourism and the transportation sector, which leaves Gaza living with the minimum requirements of life. This is in addition to the very high transportation costs from Israel to Gaza. The people of Gaza bear the costs of Israeli security procedures for unloading trucks and reloading them in other cars according to the (Back to Back) system that the Palestinian side reached with the Israeli side after much trouble. However, the Israeli side did not adhere to it despite its badness, and applied an even worse method, through complete unloading in port warehouses and then reloading in cars that reach the Palestinian areas in the Gaza Strip. Buheji (2024b) On the other hand, the commercial behaviour of Egyptian companies did not allow Palestinians from Gaza to import from Egypt or transit trade through Egypt freely. The main Egyptian company that sells to Gaza (Al-Arjani Company) had representatives in Gaza who knew the selling prices of goods and worked to deliver these goods to Gaza at the same price with a small profit margin for the Palestinian merchant, which ensured that goods would reach Gaza at several times their price if freely imported, whether from Egypt or through it.

The impoverishment of Gaza and the looting of liquidity were crowned by large fees that reached 5-7 thousand dollars for one person to leave Gaza to Egypt or through it to countries around the world, something that has never happened in any country throughout history, which contributed to the looting of the savings and liquidity available to citizens in Gaza. All of this is happening in violation of international law, crossing agreements, treatment in the event of wars, the humanitarian situation, or the so-called Arab and Islamic brotherhood in Arab and Muslim countries. After the closure of the main crossing between Gaza and Egypt, goods began to enter directly through Israel, with only five companies allowed, which strengthened the monopoly and made these traders allow others to coordinate imports through them for \$50,000 per truck, which also contributed to the continued draining of liquidity from the Gaza Strip, weakening its economy, increasing its impoverishment, and raising prices significantly in light of the state of poverty, lack of salaries, and inability to pay with weak purchasing power.

3.3 The Reality of the Home Front After October 7th

3.3.1 The Economic Situation of Home Front Since October 7th

In an interview with one of Gaza's Local Government officials, the first author questioned the efforts taken to protect the home front before and during the war on Gaza. The answer was that they are ready for this and are practising many measures

that work to protect consumer security and provide various goods at reasonable prices within people's reach. He mentioned, for example, among the measures taken by the Ministry of National Economy within the work of its delegate in the Emergency Committee are the following:

- a. Forming a team to monitor imported goods, done through the Rafah crossing with Egypt, determining lists of goods allowed to enter to meet people's needs, and preventing luxury and entertainment goods due to the limited number of trucks allowed to enter. The team also evaluates prices according to the purchase, adds transportation costs and a profitable profit margin, and then determines the sale price of the imported goods to the merchant, then the wholesale price, and the consumer price. Variable lists of goods prohibited from being imported have always been developed.
- b. Forming a second team to ensure that goods are sold in the market at the appropriate price according to the Ministry's team's assessment by forming points of sale from new or old merchants who adhere to the Ministry's decisions.
- c. Coordinating with the investigations and police to ensure that aid and goods are secured and not stolen by gangs, outlaws, and advocates of chaos.
- d. Coordinating with merchants to determine the types of imported goods to ensure food security and provide goods to consumers at reasonable prices.
- e. Coordinating with private unions and syndicates to cooperate in controlling the situation, providing goods, and ensuring prices and quality.
- f. Coordinating with factions and deploying reinforced teams to monitor market prices and prevent monopoly and high prices, even by force.

Despite the many measures taken by the local government, it did not achieve the desired goal of providing goods to citizens or controlling their prices. The points of sale did not adhere to the local government prices except formally by selling the first few cases and then transferring the rest of the goods to the black market to be sold at multiples of the announced price.

The local government was also unable to provide the required quantities, as the occupation is at the Palestinian-Egyptian Rafah crossing, as the Israeli occupation is the one that controls the entry of trucks in terms of numbers and imported materials without any possibility of the Ministry of Economy or the Palestinian side intervening in the matter. Also, the traders did not feel the influence of the Ministry of Economy due to the chaos on the one hand, and the Israeli targeting of everyone who tried to control the system in the name of the Gaza government, which caused the authority in Gaza to lose much of its ability to control the situation and protect the internal front. Buheji and Hasan (2024b)

3.3.2 Possibility of Securing Aid and Preventing Looting from Gaza Police since October 7th

In another meeting with the director of police in the Gaza Strip to discuss the possibility of securing aid and its entry without being exposed to theft, he expressed great responsiveness and readiness to cooperate with the Relief Agencies to secure aid. However, the Israeli bombing of many of the police security centres and teams affiliated with the Palestinian police, and Israel's refusal to accept the police's cooperation with the agency led to the agency's hesitation to continue coordination,

and to set conditions on the participation of the Palestinian police in security operations, and demanded that the police not show or carry weapons, which weakened the police's ability to secure. Migdad and Buheji (2024b)

The Palestinian police also tried to protect the bombed houses from being looted and robbed. The Palestinian police have played this role many times, but they were unable to continue protecting such houses due to the intensification of the Israeli attack, the large number of bombed houses, and the repeated and deliberate targeting of police groups that provide security, protection, or organization and prevention of thefts.



Figure (3): Showing the Police Role in the Early Days of the War on Gaza

Source: Al-Rai Palestinian News Agency

3.3.3 Possibility of Controlling Prices and Exaggerated Inflation of Prices Since October 7th

In another interview with Dr. Osama Nofal, head of policies implementation in the Ministry of Economics in Gaza to discuss the role of the ministry in preserving the internal front, controlling quality and prices, and providing goods, he had a different opinion regarding the points of sale and distribution that did not play their role, as he was inclined to cancel them and liberalize the sales process while continuing the ministry's supervision of merchants in a way that ensures the provision of goods and lowering prices.

Nofal stressed the importance of their role in controlling and setting prices and following up on merchants in a way that ensures the provision of necessary goods in terms of quantity, quality, and prices. The idea of points of sale was actually cancelled and the matter was left to merchants after determining prices for them. It is noteworthy that after cancelling the idea of points of sale, large quantities of goods entered and citizens actually felt a real decrease in prices. In a fourth meeting with a key pillar person in the Cabinet of the Gaza government, when discussing the government's weak ability to control and protect aid, he attributed the matter to two reasons:

The first reason is the repeated targeting by the occupation, with the aim of destabilizing the internal front and preventing the Gaza government's ability to control security. The second reason he attributed to the government's unwillingness to impose control of chaos for special reasons, in his opinion, which he did not talk about.

The result is a great weakness in controlling chaos and the security situation and securing aid, whether for merchants or international institutions, including UNRWA, which resulted in the widespread theft of international aid through organized gangs led by certain well-known families. This led to UNRWA feeling helpless with the repeated theft of dozens of trucks daily and its inability to provide aid to residents and displaced persons, which harms the reputation and ability of UNRWA to continue. Perhaps this prompted senior leadership in UNRWA to say that if we do not find a way to protect the entry of aid and its arrival to those who deserve it, we should consider transferring this task to other international institutions such as WFP, WCK, or other international institutions. The average of one truckload of aid exceeds \$80,000 and may reach \$100,000. Buheji and Hasan (2024b)

This thinking has a very dangerous political impact and is represented in ending the role of UNRWA in the relief and employment of Palestinian refugees in the occupied territories and areas of the Palestinian diaspora, which is what the occupying state seeks to do in order to get rid of the idea of refugees and end the Palestinian issue.

3.3.4 Possibility of Maintaining the Minimum Level of Health Services Since October 7th

Perhaps the Ministry of Health had a major role in ensuring the provision of health services in light of the compelling circumstances in which the occupation deliberately destroyed hospitals and health clinics on the one hand and destroyed the roads leading to them, as well as deliberately killed and wounded without limits until the number of martyrs, missing and wounded reached more than two hundred thousand (200,000) citizens, most of whom were women, children, elderly people and the vast majority of civilians. Shorrab et. al (2024)

All of these placed heavy burdens on the Ministry of Health, which tried from the beginning to work to ensure the continuation of the work of hospitals to provide health services to citizens, the wounded and the martyrs. In fact, the Ministry, through its Undersecretary and the Directors General, began trying to secure these hospitals despite the repeated and deliberate targeting of them by the Israeli occupation. This ensured that all hospitals that were not completely bombed remained in service and provided the Ministry with the medical staff, supplies and equipment necessary to operate at the minimum or even below the minimum according to what could be available in light of these difficult circumstances.

In a meeting with the Undersecretary of the Ministry, Dr. Abu Al-Rish confirmed all these meanings and more in light of their continuous exposure to direct targeting and their constant movement from one place to another. He even encouraged private and civil hospitals to work and provide services and provided them with whatever supplies could be provided.

After that, the first author went to an important meeting with the Director General of Hospitals, Dr. Muhammad, who welcomed the idea, and together, we tried to expand the hospital's work to have a field branch in the south in addition to a medical point. They actually took all the approvals from the ministry, and we started working.

A medical point was established for the 'Friends of the Patient Hospital' in cooperation with the ANERA Foundation, and it began working in the city of Rafah for several months, then after the displacement from Rafah, this medical point was moved from Rafah to Mawasi Khan Yunis to continue to play its role in serving the displaced people

of our people. It was also agreed to establish a field hospital for the Friends of the Patient Hospital in the south, and we actually started working the location was chosen in the Al-Zawaida area, and we set up tents and placed fences and signs - but the work did not continue and was not completed to provide services for personal reasons. Migdad and Buheji (2024a)



Figure (4): Picture of the medical point of the ‘Friends of the Patient Hospital’ in the South of Gaza.

Source: The Authors

3.3.5 Chamber of Commerce Procedures to Protect the Home Front Since October 7th

Due to the complete paralysis that the Gaza Strip has been subjected to in the private, governmental, civil and other sectors, the Strip has become an uninhabitable place, and due to the repeated Israeli bombing. The Chambers of Commerce, like all components of the Palestinian people, have suffered from the destruction of headquarters, the dispersion and displacement of employees, the loss of work tools, and the difficulty of movement, movement and communication.

The Chambers of Commerce realized that the most important undeclared goals of the Israeli aggression were to make the Gaza Strip an uninhabitable place for Palestinians and force them to migrate voluntarily or forcibly, in addition to re-establishing Israel's control over the Gaza Strip due to its latent wealth, and for the Palestinian region to turn into a purely Jewish state devoid of Palestinians. Therefore, in light of the aggression and displacement, the Chambers of Commerce in the Gaza Strip needed to unify their ranks and work to restore their role in providing their services to all components of the private sector as well as their members.

The Chamber of Commerce in Gaza tried to take its role in the protection of the home front through the following:

- A. The Central Emergency Committee for the Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture in the Gaza Strip was established, including all the boards of directors of the five Chambers of Commerce in the Gaza Strip, and an administrative body was elected and various integrated working committees were formed. The Central Emergency Committee began its work at the headquarters of the Chamber of

Commerce and Industry in Rafah Governorate after it was restored due to the damage it sustained as a result of the Israeli bombing of Rafah City.

- B. To benefit from the members of the Chambers' Councils who were forced by their circumstances to be abroad, they were approved as support and assistance committees and to represent the Chambers of Commerce in their locations.
- C. An action plan was adopted to respond to the emergency situation and attempt to mitigate its effects, focusing on reactivating the services provided to members, such as issuing the necessary statements and letters to obtain passports and visas. The committee works with the relevant authorities to enable citizens in the Arab Republic of Egypt to obtain travel visas to foreign countries and Turkey without the condition of having a residence in Egypt. The committee continued to document cooperation with the General Federation of Chambers of Commerce, Palestinian Authority institutions, the private sector and the Coordination Council to unify efforts against Israeli plans aimed at disrupting life in Gaza and pushing citizens to emigrate.
- D. The Chamber has communicated with international institutions and Arab, Islamic and international chambers of commerce to pressure Israel to stop the aggression and bring in the seized goods and trucks through the crossings, especially food and basic commodities. It mobilized support for the Palestinian cause by communicating with Arab and international consulates, embassies, and chambers of commerce. It discussed the possibility of filing lawsuits against Israel before international courts to compensate those affected.
- E. The Committee continued to coordinate closely with the new government headed by His Excellency Dr. Mohammed Mustafa. It stressed the need to continue intensive efforts to stop the Israeli aggression on Gaza and for the government to place at the top of its priorities stopping the aggression, returning the displaced and providing them with relief, reconstruction, and strengthening and supporting the private sector to regain its activity.
- F. The Committee continued to support and advocate for the urgent needs of citizens, such as providing food, clothing, and other basic needs at reasonable prices, and to shed light on problems through periodic and ongoing meetings with international community institutions and ministries of the Palestinian National Authority and issuing written statements in Arabic and English to promote and advocate for our urgent issues.
- G. Regarding restricting imports from the Arab Republic of Egypt to only five companies, the Committee expressed its categorical rejection of this unilateral Israeli measure, considering that it leads to monopoly and high prices and exposes the Palestinian cause to harm. The Committee called for increasing the number of companies allowed to import, which was later achieved partially. The Committee also stressed the right of all companies to import and export without restrictions freely. The Committee continues to call on the national authorities and the international community to work to ensure freedom of import for all and prevent monopoly.
- H. The Committee is working with all partners to stimulate trade by opening additional crossings and finding paths and sources for the entry of basic goods in order to break monopoly and exploitation, increase quantities and facilitate the

geographical distribution of goods throughout the sector, as the quantities received to date do not represent more than 5% of private sector imports under normal circumstances, which has caused a significant shortage in supply in terms of quantity and quality. The committee continues to highlight the ongoing difficulties faced by the private sector in importing the food items permitted by the occupation and the vague and unjust mechanism set by the occupation to import goods, in addition to the extortion and high costs that merchants are subjected to in order to obtain coordination to bring in goods from the Israeli side.

- I. Due to the large displacement or travel abroad of members of the chambers of commerce in the sector, the committee worked to create a unified database to know the locations of its members in order to work on serving them and alleviating their suffering, especially since most of them live in tents or shelters or in areas of Gaza City and the north in difficult humanitarian conditions with difficulty in reaching or communicating and contacting them. They have already been reached and it has been confirmed that they have obtained some of the necessities of life through relief organizations and attempts have been made to solve their living problems as much as possible to enable them to withstand.
- J. Recently, the problem of cash shortages has emerged in the Gaza Strip, which has exacerbated the problem of famine, malnutrition and difficult living conditions for all citizens, as citizens cannot withdraw their money from the bank to buy life necessities, in addition to the high prices of necessities as a result of merchants resorting to some cash monopolists from weak-willed individuals or money changers who provide cash in exchange for a percentage that may reach twenty percent of the original amount. The committee warned of this problem for a long time and appealed to the Monetary Authority, banks, the General Union of Palestinian Chambers, and the International Quartet and international community institutions to intervene to resolve this crisis before it occurs. The committee is still working with Palestinian authorities to bring cash into Gaza, raising awareness among merchants and citizens and encouraging them to use electronic payment as a partial, interim solution. 11. Several meetings were held with international relief organizations to urge them to involve private sector institutions in importing and distributing relief materials in order to maximize the Palestinian economy's benefit from this aid and not limit it to the relief dimension only, and breakthroughs and successes have been achieved in this area.
- K. The damages were initially assessed to determine the value of private sector losses. Action plans, lists of relief projects, and early recovery projects for economic sectors were also prepared and shared with donors to provide the necessary funding.
- L. After the ground invasion of Rafah and the closure of the committee's office there, a new office was opened in Gaza City to resume the work of the chambers of commerce and serve their members as well as the Palestinian community.
- M. Regarding the next phase, the Central Emergency Committee of the Chambers of Commerce, as the incubator of all private sector institutions, was keen to develop and lead a strong and scalable plan that ensures the rapid recovery of economic activities and strengthens the economy and infrastructure in the long term. This plan will be implemented in effective cooperation with friendly chambers of commerce worldwide and international community institutions to benefit from

expertise, resources, and best global practices. This plan will be implemented in three phases, with the first phase including immediate response to the requirements of emergency infrastructure repair and providing the necessary support to all establishments and businesses to resume activities as quickly as possible in cooperation with international community institutions. The second medium-term phase will achieve economic stability by enhancing sectoral support and encouraging small and medium enterprises to grow and prosper by benefiting from global expertise and technologies in reconstruction efforts. The third long-term phase will include encouraging the development of sustainable economic and advanced educational policies, with intensive and integrated use of technology within these policies, with support from the international community to ensure Gaza's agile resilience and long-term economic growth. Buheji and Mushimiyimana (2023a)

One could conclude that the Gaza Chambers of Commerce is committed to leading the long-term economic recovery and development efforts in the Gaza Strip, through a strategic focus on enhancing cooperation with Palestinian, Arab and international chambers of commerce. This approach seeks to integrate national, Arab and international resources, expertise and networks, to build a strong foundation that enhances the prosperity of the entire region.

3.3.6 Role of the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) Since October 7th

While we are writing about the home front since October 7th, 2023, we cannot forget the role of the Ministry of Endowments internally and externally. The ministry has, thankfully, continued to direct preachers to focus on issues that need to be addressed and that harm the home front. We find preachers constantly focusing on harmony and affection, receiving the displaced, honouring them, housing them, and providing them with water. On the other hand, they also focus on forgiveness, tolerance, and kindness among people in a way that ensures avoiding problems between families, in addition to talking about the problems themselves and rising above them, working to accept solutions and avoiding the use of weapons and sharp tools no matter what the case.



Figure (5): Shows the Destruction of the Mosques and the persistence of the Awqaf to continue the Services of the prayer.

Ref: Al-Jazeera (2024)

The Ministry of Information also communicated with Muslim scholars abroad and worked to issue statements and fatwas urging neighbouring countries and Muslims around the world to help and support the people in Palestine financially, pray for them, and support them morally. It also worked on issuing a statement urging Muslims to wage jihad with weapons and open the borders to the mujahideen so that they could support their brothers in the Gaza Strip against the Crusaders and hypocrites who have gathered against them and who follow them in their misguidance in their hostility to Islam and Muslims.

3.3.7 The Home Front in Digital Media Since October 7th

According to Al Jazeera, the "Home Front" appeared in digital media for the first time in May 2023, when the Ministry of Interior and National Security, which the Gaza government runs, announced the launch of a platform called "The Home Front", and said that it came within the framework of keenness to provide information and the official narrative with appropriate tools to citizens in light of the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people, and "in a way that contributes to consolidating the Palestinian home front and blocking the path of rumor mongers, and to enhance windows of communication with citizens."

It said at the time that "the platform will be dedicated to publishing data and information in various fields that serve Palestinian society, especially in times of escalation, Israeli aggression, and emergency situations." The Government Media Office stressed the need for everyone to stand up to their responsibilities, and said in a statement addressed to the Gazans, "Be careful not to let down your people and your cause, and do not be an aid to the occupation by being dragged behind its propaganda and psychological warfare tools." However, the data on this platform disappeared during the months of the war, until new accounts were activated under the name of the "Home Front" on the Telegram, WhatsApp, X and Facebook platforms. Ismail Al-Thawabta, the Director General of the Government Media Office, told Al Jazeera Net that the Home Front platforms work on two tracks, the first of which is "supporting the Home Front in messages directed to citizens and our Palestinian people here in the Gaza Strip by directing it with correct instructions that must be adhered to and followed to protect them, their families and their honourable families, as well as providing the information and guidance that our Palestinian people need in light of the aggressive war of genocide against our Palestinian people."

The second path that Al-Thawabat has set for the home front is to "confront the rumours and fake news spread by the Israeli occupation's propaganda machine, as well as refute the lies spread by the occupation and confront the psychological warfare practised by the occupation against our Palestinian people." The government official said that "the main goal behind these platforms is to consolidate and support the home front and confront the psychological warfare and propaganda of the Israeli occupation."

3.4 Describing the Current Overall Situation of Home Front After Ten Months of the War on Gaza

It seems that this war was not only a surprise to the Israeli enemy, but it was also a surprise to the home front in the Gaza Strip, in terms of its size and the unprecedented Israeli reaction in history, which was represented in starting a war of extermination, destruction, killing and starvation of every Palestinian in Gaza.

It was expected that there would be real plans to secure the home front and prevent security chaos, theft and organized crime, but the Israeli reaction was at a level that astonished everyone, not only in Gaza but in the whole world because of the genocide and the extent of destruction, killing and demolition practised by the Israeli occupation in all aspects of life in the Gaza Strip. Buheji and Hasan (2024b)

Perhaps the level of the emergency plan prepared by the Gaza government officials did not rise to the level of the fierce attack and war of extermination practised by the Israeli occupation. The home front collapsed with the Israeli aggression in the early periods due to the intense fear of targeting everyone who belonged to the Gaza government or Hamas, whether military or non-military, but after a while, those in charge in Gaza were able to restore order and organize things to the minimum level in order to prevent the complete collapse of the home front, which was severely damaged.

The writer Mohsen Abu Ramadan (2023) pointed out the emergence of some negative phenomena in society, including the unfair distribution of aid, high prices through the presence of individuals and groups exploiting what happened in order to achieve quick profit at the expense of the suffering of citizens, as there was a shortage of funds to cover food and medical needs due to the siege and collective punishment imposed by the occupation, accompanied by acts of genocide and the push towards voluntary or forced displacement of the residents of Gaza. While we confirm this, we add that the continued theft of aid has deprived most of the people and the displaced from obtaining their fair share of free aid and contributed to the acceleration of the depletion of their funds and their rapid poverty.

The weakness and damage to the internal front were represented in many phenomena in addition to what Mr. Abu Ramadan mentioned, the widespread family problems with the excessive use of firearms is one of the problems, the spread of moral corruption in its various manifestations, the spread of drug distribution more widely than normal, and the spread of armed gangs based and supported by the occupation to promote chaos, in addition to the weakness of the system and the rule of law in general.

With the continued hunger and lack of food security throughout the Gaza Strip, especially in Gaza City and the north, international organizations such as ANERA and OCHA, in cooperation with the Relief Agency, sent a number of trucks loaded with vegetables, fruits and food baskets to the north. However, unfortunately, they were stolen by gangs on August 4, 2024, which shows the extent of the weakness of the internal situation, and also led to depriving the people of the north who suffer from hunger and food insecurity, depriving them of this opportunity to deliver some of the goods that are missing and unavailable to them, such as vegetables, fruits and chicken.

3.5 The Psychological Warfare Against the Gaza Strip

The Israeli occupation practised the most severe degrees of psychological warfare against the displaced and residents of the Gaza Strip on all occasions. The threat of moving the military operation to the Rafah area continued for several weeks before it entered, and people were in great distress for fear of displacement, while they were waiting for a truce or a real and complete cessation of the war with the spread of news of all parties accepting the truce with its conditions.

At every time, Israel rejected the truce. It persisted in setting new conditions, which prompted Hamas to reject it, which is what Israel was planning regarding its desire to continue the war under the pretext of achieving its goals. Rumours about specifying new, conflicting and wide displacement areas were also repeated, putting people in turmoil and continuous displacement. Here, the first author gives an example of spreading rumours of displacement from all of Bureij and East Nuseirat on July 28. The occupation sent a message with a map of the dangerous areas to UNRWA and a curfew for UNRWA employees. Figure (5) shows the map spread like wildfire among the people, starting a very large displacement process amidst the hesitation and contradiction of news in this regard. The red area in the middle of the map is a combat zone that must be evacuated, the middle line is Salah al-Din Street, the largest area is the Bureij area and the smallest is part of Nusayrat that is part of the danger and evacuation zone.



Figure (6): Map showing Level of the Displacement

Reference: Quds News Network (2024)

People were in trouble as soon as this map was downloaded. In addition to being tiring and physically exhausting, the displacement process is also financially costly, given that most people are running out of money and have no income. Rumours spread about the necessity of evacuation and other rumours that evacuation is only for specific areas and the result will be at the expense of blood, killing and destruction for the Palestinian people in Gaza. What confirms such rumours is that at the same time that rumours spread about the importance of displacement to safe areas in Deir al-Balah, another rumour spread among international organizations operating in the city of Deir al-Balah about the importance of evacuating from it and searching for other safe places. All this prompted residents and displaced people to say (Okay, where do we go?).

An example of psychological warfare is Israel's attempt to always link violent Israeli operations against civilians with the presence of some resistance operations or the presence of resistance members at the site of an Israeli operation that results in hundreds of martyrs, wounded and thousands of displaced persons. This is done to push the population and displaced persons to reject the resistance, destabilize the home front and hold the resistance responsible for this violence. Unfortunately, we

found a small number of people who go along with this Zionist propaganda and rumours and, condemn the resistance and hold it partly or even completely responsible without the slightest sense of patriotism. Buheji and Mushimiyimana (2023b)

The Palestinian Media Center stated to worry about the "the renewed and blatant attempts by the enemy aim to create a rift among the ranks of our home front, spread a spirit of division and destabilize its stability and cohesion. We see that "what the occupation army and its propaganda machine are doing is part of the war on our people and comes within the framework of the overt psychological warfare operations against the home front and the Palestinian popular incubator.

The government media person continued by saying: Such attempts prove the failure of the occupation to create any gap in the ranks of the home front, despite the methodology of repetition and intensity in spreading its various false narratives. Our people are fully aware of such attempts, and their confidence in the resistance and such fabrications do not shake our security services. But it is important to say here that these rumours have exhausted civilians, residents and displaced persons, and have negatively affected them greatly. They have exhausted them physically, psychologically and financially, as each displacement operation costs thousands of shekels and is accompanied by the loss of a lot of property and individuals, as well as the abandonment of homes, which thieves are often able to loot while their residents have left and are afraid of bombing.

3.6 The Type of Families Who Impacted the Home Front Since 7th Oct

The first author observed that different families played different roles in affecting or protecting Gaza's home front. Certain families play a negative role due to the bitter reality and harsh conditions they go through, where they experience extreme dangers and fear for life.

Other families participated in shacking the home front and spreading security chaos. But, this occurred through a small number of families, especially those living in the border areas. These type of families formed armed gangs to steal aid and merchants' goods by force of arms, which negatively affected not only the cohesion of the home front but also the starvation of the population and the displaced, especially those from the north. It also negatively affected the values of justice, equality and the sense of citizenship, in addition to spreading the culture of taking rights by force of arms, which the overall Gaza's society cannot accept. This negative role of families, especially in looting the aid that UNRWA brings, has a dangerous political impact related to the alignment with the occupation in marginalizing the role of the agency and working to stop its activities and then replacing it with other international institutions that contribute to ending the state of asylum that all countries of the world recognize and seek to solve the Palestinian issue and treat the refugee problem by establishing a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders.

However, the most amazing, inspiring stories full of values comes from the third type of Gazan families who played a positive role in protecting the home front. These are the large majority of the families that rejected any suspicious role that might lead to the collapse of the home front, especially with regard to accepting to deal with those who steal aid. These families rejected this approach and thinking and sought, in cooperation with the relevant authorities, to search for creative solutions that confront the creative chaos that Israel seeks to create. Al-Muhannadi and Buheji (2024)

Most families also played respectable and appreciated roles in terms of reforming relations, solving problems, and preventing chaos, as well as cooperating with each other and sometimes with the police. Now there are attempts by several families to establish a mechanism in cooperation with UNRWA to bring in aid and protect its direct access to the population so that it is not stolen. , which ensures the continuation of the role of UNRWA in its humanitarian and political field.

Some families have also established takiyas with their own efforts and sometimes with the support and funding of family members from abroad or from charitable people interested in the Gaza Strip. Examples of these takiyas include the Al-Muqdad Takiya, which the family itself established, then funded by charitable people abroad from family members and others, then cooperated with the WCK Foundation and the UNRWA Foundation to expand the takiya to accommodate the largest possible number until it was able to prepare food for more than two thousand people daily. This contributed to supporting the internal front in the field of feeding food.



Figure (7): Illustrates the Role of Takiyas in Feeding the Gazans After Oct, 7th 2023

Reference: Al-Quds Al-Arabi

3.7 The Role of Palestinian Factions and Parties in Protecting the Home Front

The Palestinian factions and parties played some roles in protecting the home front by threatening with various statements those who cause chaos or monopolistic merchants. The factions also cooperated by deploying some armed and masked men in the markets to control prices, prevent quarrels, and stop attacks between families. This is in addition to the ongoing cooperation with those in charge of Gaza to try to control the home front.

An example of the factions' important role is what happened in early August 2024. A major family problem arose between the (A) family and the (M) family, and in order for the problem not to escalate and develop, we, the families, intervened directly and in cooperation with the factions, as the Popular Front faction and the Hamas faction cooperated with us to pressure the two families to accept the tribal reconciliation and end the problem. Indeed, the problem ended with an honourable reconciliation that

preserved the rights of their owners and maintained affection between the two families instead of animosity and resentment. Buheji and Hasan (2024a)

3.8 Building More Resilient Home Front

It can be said clearly that the government's emergency plan to protect the home front was good in theory, but it was not up to the event in practice and application, and its officials were not qualified to implement it under difficult circumstances and under fire. For example, the police, the Ministries of Health, the Economy and agriculture all played good roles, but they were faced with a fierce, unprecedented and unexpected level of atrocities and destruction by the occupation to prevent them from playing their role in protecting the home front. The Chamber of Commerce also played a commendable role in the economic field in coordination with various local and international parties.

Indeed, the home front suffered from a major breakdown in security, the depletion of goods and the rise in prices, which negatively and significantly affected the population and prevented the fair distribution of aid, the weak availability of goods in the market and the rise in their prices. It is not correct to say that the people are the responsibility of UNRWA, while we take care of the resistance. This statement would cause the Gaza administration to lose credibility, weaken the cohesion of the home front and increase the anger of those who are not loyal to the resistance, and there are many. The home front has been severely damaged, often to the point of collapse.

It is difficult for us to blame anyone for the weak discipline of the home front, as the occupation army targets any individual or entity that organizes the home front, especially those who are working to prevent the spread of chaos. We have seen many officials, whether in the police, the military, or civilian ministries, who have been targeted, bombed, and martyred.

It is also essential not to monopolize strategic decisions and to work on cooperation between all parties to preserve the home front in any way possible. Here we mean all parties of the government on the one hand and the Relief Agency (UNRWA) on the other hand and the rest of the international institutions in addition to the parties, unions, federations, chambers of commerce, and other active parties.

Yes, the way out is to work to end the war at any cost, as those who planned it gave roles to the group of resistance countries on the one hand and to the group of Arab and Islamic countries on the other hand, but these countries were not up to the occasion and were unable to intervene to confront the atrocities of the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) that brought together the United States of America, NATO, and some supporting Arab countries. The Arab and Muslim countries were not up to the challenge, nor were they prepared to confront it, neither by words, nor by boycott, nor by protest, let alone by opening the borders and supplying weapons and people who are willing to fight.

4.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The events following October 7, 2023, have exacerbated an already dire situation in Gaza, where the imposition of collective punitive measures by Israel has led to a humanitarian disaster of unprecedented proportions. The systematic destruction of essential infrastructure, coupled with a prolonged economic blockade, has decimated

the region's socio-economic fabric, pushing poverty and food insecurity to extreme levels.

This paper has underscored the possibilities of resilience fatigue of Gaza's home front, where both internal and external pressures continually test the population's resilience. The authors show that the deliberate impoverishment, looting of resources, and psychological warfare employed against the residents of Gaza have not only led to widespread suffering but also challenged the ability of local authorities and international organizations to provide effective relief and maintain order.

As the War on Gaza continues, it is imperative that a review of new mechanisms that support the internal home front and help it address the violations conducted by the disrupters. The paper implies that it shows the role of various factions, families, and institutions within Gaza and how they play a critical part in either exacerbating or alleviating the challenges the home front faces.

In conclusion, the situation in Gaza serves as a stark reminder of the devastating impact of prolonged War that is combined with a semi-blockade on civilian populations. The global community must recognize and address the systemic issues that have led to this crisis, ensuring that such tragedies are not repeated and that the rights and dignity of the people of Gaza are upheld.

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