

The Wounded Land

Special Report

**On the Destruction of Agricultural Lands in Gaza and Its Impact on
Food Security During the Aggression Since October 7, 2023**

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Introduction

At the heart of one of the world's most densely populated and conflict-stricken regions, agriculture in the Gaza Strip serves as a lifeline for over two million people. It is not only a source of food, but also a vital expression of Palestinian cultural and economic identity. Since October 7, 2023, this sector has been subjected to systematic destruction, including the bulldozing of farmland, bombing of greenhouses, killing of livestock, and drying up of water sources—constituting a gr

ave violation of international humanitarian law.

This report documents this systematic devastation, analyzes its humanitarian, economic, and environmental consequences, and issues an urgent call to the international community to halt this “green genocide” and support the reconstruction of the agricultural sector as an essential pillar of justice and sustainable peace.

Section I: Agriculture in Gaza – Key Facts Prior to the War

- **Agricultural Area:** 178 square kilometers (49% of the Gaza Strip's total area).
- **Agricultural Workforce:** 56,000 families directly employed, with hundreds of thousands indirectly dependent on the sector.
- **Major Products:** Strawberries, olives, tomatoes, cucumbers, and citrus fruits.
- **Irrigated Agriculture:** Accounts for approximately 44% of agricultural activity; rain-fed agriculture constitutes about 3%.
- **Exports:** Agricultural and fishery exports valued at USD 67.3 million (2022).
- **Reliance on Local Production:** Locally produced food represents 44% of Gaza's food basket.

Section II: Systematic Destruction – Timeline of Damages

From October 2023 to April 2025

- **October 2023:** Launch of intense bombardment targeting agricultural lands along the security fence.
- **November 2023:** The occupation declares a buffer zone extending 1 km into Gaza's territory.
- **January 2024:** The United Nations documents the bulldozing of 22% of Gaza's agricultural lands.
- **March 2024:** 48% of greenhouses in northern Gaza destroyed (FAO).
- **May 2024:** Satellite imagery reveals a 57% decline in crop health.
- **July 2024:** Over 80% of agricultural lands reported destroyed.
- **April 2025:** Ministry of Agriculture reports destruction of 167,000 dunums and losses exceeding USD 325 million.

Section III: Patterns of Targeting and Destruction

1. **Bulldozing and Bombardment**
 - Systematic bulldozing of more than 75% of cultivated fields.
 - Direct targeting of greenhouses, wells, plastic tunnels, and storage facilities.
2. **Establishment of the "Buffer Zone"**
 - Inclusion of agricultural lands within a so-called security strip inside Gaza.
 - Denial of farmers' access to their lands.
3. **Chemical Pesticide Poisoning**
 - Spraying of vast agricultural areas with hazardous pesticides, contaminating soil and groundwater.
4. **Deliberate Destruction of Agricultural Infrastructure**
 - Destruction of 70% of water wells in northern Gaza.
 - 339 greenhouses, 626 water wells, and 307 livestock shelters destroyed.
5. **Targeting Community and Women-led Projects**
 - The "Green Girls" Project in Khuza'a – a model for women's empowerment – was completely destroyed, with losses estimated at USD 90,000.

Section IV: Economic, Environmental, and Social Impacts

1. Food Insecurity

- 90% of Gaza's population now depends on food aid.
- Food prices have increased by 80%.
- Severe shortages in animal protein and fresh vegetables.

2. Famine and Malnutrition

- United Nations reports indicate clear signs of famine, particularly in the northern part of the Strip.
- Children are the most affected, with rising rates of chronic diseases caused by hunger and malnutrition.

3. Destruction of Livestock Resources

- Death of over 36 million chickens, 850,000 laying hens, 70,000 sheep, and the destruction of 400 dairy farms.

4. Environmental Pollution

- Soil contamination due to heavy metals and unexploded ordnance.
- 80% of the vegetation cover has been destroyed.

5. Unemployment and Poverty

- Tens of thousands of agricultural workers have lost their jobs.
- Many farmers have become displaced persons or dependent on aid.

Section V: Impact on Key Areas

1. Khan Younis

- 90% of agricultural lands destroyed.
- Direct targeting of farmers, women-led projects, wells, and storage facilities.

2. Northern Gaza (Beit Lahia, Beit Hanoun)

- 35,000 dunums of farmland destroyed.
- The area was once known as "Gaza's Food Paradise."
- Over 40,000 farmers lost their source of income.

3. Rafah

- Most of the "Meraj" farmlands destroyed; these lands were considered the backbone of agriculture in southern Gaza.
 - Systematic targeting of greenhouses, wells, and irrigation lines.
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Section VI: International Law – Framework and Violation

According to Protocol II Additional to the Geneva Conventions (1977), the use of starvation as a method of warfare constitutes a crime, and it is prohibited to target food sources and agricultural means upon which civilians depend.

What has been documented in the Gaza Strip — including starvation, and the systematic and widespread destruction of agriculture — represents a clear violation of this law and amounts to a **crime against humanity**.

Section VII: Recommendations

To the International Community:

- Conduct an immediate investigation into the destruction of agricultural infrastructure and classify such acts as war crimes.
- Support emergency programs aimed at rehabilitating the agricultural sector.
- Enforce special protection measures for farmers and agricultural facilities under international law.
- Ensure farmers' access to their lands.
- Support urgent food security projects and facilitate a transition toward sustainable agriculture.

To United Nations Agencies:

- Develop an emergency intervention plan to prevent famine.
- Allocate urgent resources to support the resilience of local food production.
- Monitor the unlawful use of pesticides and widespread land bulldozing.

- Publish monthly reports on food deterioration in Gaza.

Conclusion

The destruction of agriculture in Gaza is not merely an attack on trees or fields; it is an assault on the right to food, life, and dignity. It is a weapon used against unarmed civilians in blatant violation of international law. Therefore, international silence on this crime constitutes implicit complicity. This report is a call to the human conscience to act in order to end this systematic destruction, placing agriculture—like humanity—at the heart of every project for peace and justice.

Appendices: Documentary Photos and Maps

1. Satellite Images

- Agricultural damage assessment in Gaza Strip – UNOSAT

Map illustrating changes in agricultural areas due to deterioration in crop health and density.

Map link: unosat.org

Satellite images documenting the destruction of agriculture in Gaza since its onset.

Detailed Report

Introduction:

Agriculture constitutes one of the foundational pillars of the Palestinian economy, holding significant importance to Palestinian identity as it is closely tied to the land, cultural heritage, and social life.

Agricultural lands in the Gaza Strip represent a vital lifeline for its population, ensuring food security and providing employment opportunities for thousands of workers. However, the ongoing conflict in the Strip has caused severe damage to these agricultural lands, depriving many people of a critical source of livelihood.

The agricultural area in the Gaza Strip is estimated at 178 square kilometers, representing approximately 49% of the total area of the Gaza Strip. Although this is a relatively small area, it holds strategic importance for the local economy. The agricultural lands are primarily located in the northern and eastern parts of Gaza, with about 80% of these lands situated adjacent to the separation barrier established by the occupying power.

The residents of Gaza rely on these lands to produce essential food items such as vegetables and fruits. Additionally, some agricultural products are exported to regional markets, including the continuous export of

strawberries from Gaza, along with other crops, providing supplementary income for farmers and supporting the local economy.

Rain-fed agriculture constitutes approximately 3% of the cultivated lands in the Gaza Strip, while irrigated agriculture accounts for about 44%. The total area cultivated with horticultural trees, vegetables, and field crops in Gaza amounts to approximately 117,000 dunums, of which 32% are located in Khan Younis and 29% in northern Gaza.

The cultivated area in northern Gaza is estimated at approximately 34,000 dunums. Vegetable cultivation constitutes 53% of the total agricultural area in the Gaza Strip, with 34% concentrated in the northern Gaza governorate and 30% in Khan Younis governorate. Meanwhile, the area planted with horticultural trees represents 30.9% of the total cultivated area in Gaza, with 31.3% located in Khan Younis and 22.3% in northern Gaza.

Olive trees account for the highest proportion, representing 63% of the total area planted with horticultural trees, distributed across Gaza governorates as follows: 34% in Khan Younis, 24% in Deir al-Balah, 17% in northern

Gaza, 12% in Gaza City, and 13% in Rafah. Vegetables follow, as more than half of Gaza's agricultural production is plant-based.

Prior to the outbreak of war, agriculture represented approximately 10% of Gaza's economy, with the livelihoods of more than 560,000 people dependent partially or fully on crop cultivation, livestock grazing, and fishing. In 2022, Gaza's agricultural and fisheries exports amounted to

USD 67.3 million, primarily consisting of fresh crops such as berries, tomatoes, cucumbers, eggplants, sweet peppers, and fresh fish.

Approximately 81 square kilometers of permanent crop fields and arable land in Gaza have significantly deteriorated in terms of health and density. The policies of land leveling, tank incursions, and aerial bombardment contributed to the decline in crop health and density.

On the first day of the massacre, October 7, 2023, intensive bombing by occupation forces' aircraft along the eastern border strip of Gaza targeted agricultural lands. This was followed by targeted land leveling and clearing in northern Gaza, in preparation for a ground invasion, resulting in the destruction of agricultural lands and crops, as well as damage to associated livestock farms.

In early November 2023, Israeli authorities announced the establishment of a buffer zone extending one kilometer inside Gaza territory, effectively seizing approximately 26% of Gaza's total area.

In January 2024, the United Nations issued a report stating that occupation authorities had leveled approximately 22% of Gaza's agricultural land, including orchards and greenhouses, since the beginning of the genocide until that time.

By February 2024, the destruction of agricultural land in Gaza had reached about 40%, amid ongoing ground operations in Khan Younis governorate. Oxfam reported that northern Gaza, the largest producer of fruits and vegetables, lost its seasonal agricultural production due to the continued massacre and blockade in northern Gaza.

In the same month, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) issued a report detailing the extent of destruction sustained by agricultural facilities in the Gaza Strip. The report documented the destruction of 626 water wells, 47 water pools, one port, 307 domestic animal pens, 100 agricultural warehouses, 46 agricultural storage facilities, 7 agricultural supply centers, 119 animal shelters, 11 rabbit farms, 26 dairy farms, 235 broiler chicken farms, 7 guinea fowl farms, 203 sheep farms, 5 cattle farms, and 42 poultry and pigeon farms. Additionally, 339 greenhouses out of a total of 1,277 were destroyed, representing 26.6% of Gaza's greenhouses.

Abdul Hakim Al-Wa'er, the FAO Regional Representative for the Near East and North Africa, stated that Gaza's agricultural sector had effectively entered a stage of collapse due to the ongoing war. Beyond the destruction of crops, greenhouses, and animal production, Al-Wa'er highlighted that 27.7% of water wells were completely destroyed or at least rendered non-operational. In northern Gaza, specifically, over 35% of the water wells ceased production.

In March 2024, according to a survey conducted by FAO, the percentage of lands producing vegetables and agricultural products that were completely destroyed reached 42%. Damage in northern Gaza alone was estimated at 45%, including the destruction of 48% of the greenhouses in that area. The overall destruction rate across the Gaza Strip was about 26%. The importance of these greenhouses lies in their participation in food production chains during normal seasons.

In April 2024, another FAO survey indicated that 50% of the lands producing vegetables and agricultural products were completely destroyed.

In May 2024, satellite maps published by UNOSAT showed extensive damage to agricultural lands, with a significant decline in crop health and density compared to the previous seven seasons spanning 2017 to 2024. The decline was attributed to war-related activities such as land leveling, heavy vehicle movement, bombing, and other conflict dynamics. The

analysis assessed damage to orchards, other trees, field crops, and vegetables.

Compared to the average of the previous seven years, approximately 57% of the permanent crop fields in Gaza showed a noticeable decline in health and density as of May 2024. The comprehensive evaluation indicated a 30% increase in the area of damaged agricultural land since the previous analysis in April 2024. Furthermore, there was a marked rise in the destruction of orchards, other trees, field crops, and vegetables in Gaza governorate, with an increase of 20 percentage points compared to the April 2024 analysis.

Moreover, there was a significant escalation in the destruction of agricultural land within northern Gaza governorate, with damage rising from 46% in April 2024 to 68% in May 2024. This assessment is considered preliminary.

By June 2024, field research revealed that approximately 75% of agricultural lands in the Gaza Strip were completely destroyed, with some lands incorporated into the buffer zone and others isolated in preparation for annexation.

In July 2024, the destruction rate of agricultural lands across all Gaza regions reached approximately 80%, coinciding with widespread famine across the Strip, especially severe in northern Gaza.

In August 2024, the Government Media Office announced that only 2% of agricultural lands remained viable compared to the total agricultural area prior to the genocide war.

In September 2024, an assessment by the FAO showed that severe damage to agricultural lands had reached 67.6%. Khan Younis governorate recorded the highest percentage of damaged agricultural lands at 61%, while northern Gaza registered the highest overall damage rate at approximately 78%. Additionally, Rafah governorate recorded the greatest damage to greenhouses.

On April 12, 2025, according to specialized reports from the Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture, the total area of plant production destroyed as a result of the Israeli war on Gaza reached 167,000 dunams, including 78,000 dunams planted with vegetables, 14,000 dunams with field crops, and 75,000 dunams of arboriculture (tree orchards).

The estimated loss of plant production amounts to 459,000 tons, valued at more than 325.5 million US dollars, while export losses reached 67 million US dollars.

Agricultural and environmental expert Nizar Al-Wahidi stated that the Israeli war, which has affected all aspects of life in the Gaza Strip, destroyed approximately 90% of the agricultural sector and rendered the production cycle in all border areas inoperative.

He pointed out that only 10% of the agricultural lands remain within the Gaza Strip, limited to some areas west of Al-Zawayda in central Gaza and west of Khan Yunis, covering no more than 15,000 dunams.

The expert added that during its control over the Nitzanim axis, the occupation destroyed thousands of dunams designated for growing grapes, figs, and many types of fruits, and repeated the same scenario by leveling vast areas planted with vegetables after taking control of Rafah city and separating it from Khan Yunis via what is called the "Mirage" axis.

Israeli colonial policies aimed at destroying the agricultural sector represent a continuation and replication of practices by some settler colonial regimes.

The following are the most prominent damages inflicted on agriculture:

Extent of destruction in agricultural lands:

According to a joint assessment by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Satellite Center (UNOSAT), 75% of agricultural fields, including olive orchards, were damaged or completely destroyed.

In Khan Yunis governorate, more than 90% of agricultural lands were destroyed, severely affecting food security in the Strip.

Northern Gaza governorate recorded the highest damage rate, with 78.2% of agricultural lands affected. Orchards and fields were systematically

leveled; about 35,000 dunams of agricultural lands in Beit Lahia, Beit Hanoun, and east of Jabalia were cleared, removing them from the production cycle and causing the loss of crops such as citrus, tomatoes, and strawberries. Furthermore, 44.3% of agricultural greenhouses were damaged, impacting vegetable production.

Destruction of agricultural infrastructure:

Approximately 70% of water wells in northern Gaza were destroyed, resulting in more than two-thirds of agricultural wells being out of service. This led to severe irrigation water shortages, exacerbating the food and water crisis.

Animal shelters, sheep farms, dairy farms, domestic animal pens, and poultry farms were also destroyed.

Losses in livestock and fisheries:

In the context of destroying the livelihoods in the Gaza Strip, Israeli occupation forces completely disabled animal production, including poultry, cattle, sheep, milk, and eggs.

Animal production constitutes a fundamental part of the agricultural sector and contributed approximately 39% of total agricultural production in Gaza. It has a direct impact on food and economic security and suffered comprehensive destruction during the war.

According to a specialized report by the Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture, there were 2,500 farms in the Gaza governorates producing 36 million chickens annually, and 180 farms raising 850,000 layer hens (“broodstock”) producing 250 million eggs annually.

The occupation forces destroyed all poultry farms, resulting in the death of more than 36 million chickens, as well as 850,000 layer hens, completely halting production.

The specialized report indicates that there were 150 turkey farms in the Gaza Strip raising one million birds annually; however, these were entirely destroyed by the occupation forces, in addition to the death of more than 300,000 domestic poultry birds.

Similarly, the Gaza governorates contained 100 calf farms producing 50,000 calves annually, 5,000 pens housing 70,000 sheep and goats—including 30,000 newborns annually—400 farms raising 2,200 cows annually producing 6,000 tons of milk per year, 22 hatcheries producing 40 million eggs annually, 5 feed factories producing 35,000 tons of feed annually, and 20,000 beehives producing 250 tons of honey annually; all of which were completely destroyed during the ongoing Israeli war.

A report by the Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture revealed that losses in animal production reached 232 million USD.

The report highlights several major challenges facing the revival of animal production, foremost among them:

- Destruction of the infrastructure of animal facilities.
- Difficulty in compensating for lost animals and procuring breeds suitable for Gaza's conditions to ensure the resumption of production.
- Difficulty in providing animal feed and farm supplies.
- The challenge of providing electricity and water in light of the destruction of most wells and the general electricity network.
- Furthermore, Gaza's port suffered severe damage, and the majority of fishing boats were destroyed, leading to the collapse of the fishing sector.

The damages inflicted on agriculture have had economic, social, and environmental impacts, including:

- **Economic losses and rising prices:**

Daily agricultural production losses are estimated at approximately 2 million USD, with total losses expected to exceed 250 million USD.

Prices of basic foodstuffs have risen by 50% to 80%, exacerbating

the suffering of the population and increasing the economic burden on families.

- **Loss of vegetation cover:**

By January 2025, 80% of Gaza's vegetation cover had been destroyed or damaged due to uprooting of trees, shelling, and pollution.

- **Soil contamination:**

The use of heavy weaponry led to soil contamination with toxins and unexploded ordnance, making re-cultivation a significant challenge.

- **Rising unemployment:**

The destruction of the agricultural sector caused thousands of farmers to lose their livelihoods, resulting in increased unemployment and poverty rates.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, plant production faces numerous challenges, most notably:

- Prevention of farmers' access to their lands.
- Control of crossings by the occupation and prevention of entry of production requirements.
- High costs for land reclamation and plowing operations due to the extent of destruction.

- High fuel prices for machinery.
- Water scarcity and lack of alternative energy sources to operate agricultural wells for irrigation.
- Additionally, the impact of climate change on both the quantity and quality of production.

Destruction of Agricultural Lands in Khan Yunis, Southern Gaza Strip

The agricultural sector in Khan Yunis governorate, southern Gaza Strip, has suffered extensive destruction due to the ongoing Israeli aggression since October 2023, resulting in an economic and humanitarian catastrophe threatening the food security of the population.

More than 90% of agricultural lands in Khan Yunis have been destroyed, indicating the vast scale of damage to the agricultural infrastructure in the area.

Among the primary methods used by the occupation to destroy lands in Khan Yunis are:

- **Widespread land leveling:**
Occupation forces leveled vast areas of agricultural lands in Khan Yunis, destroying agricultural infrastructure and depriving farmers of their livelihoods.

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- **Establishment of a buffer zone:**

The occupation imposed a buffer zone along the eastern border of the Gaza Strip, preventing farmers from accessing and utilizing their agricultural lands, which deteriorated over time.

- **Use of toxic chemical pesticides:**

The occupation sprayed agricultural lands with toxic chemical

- pesticides, destroying crops and contaminating the soil, rendering it unfit for farming for extended periods.

- **Targeting agricultural infrastructure:**

Occupation forces targeted agricultural wells and irrigation networks, disrupting irrigation operations and destroying crops.

- **Direct targeting of farmers:**

Farmers in Khan Yunis were subjected to repressive practices and direct attacks by occupation forces, which prevented their access to lands and caused casualties, forcing many to abandon their lands.

- **Destruction of small agricultural projects:**

Small agricultural projects, such as the “Green Girls” project in the town of Khuza’a, were destroyed, including the leveling of farmland, destruction of greenhouses and equipment, resulting in significant financial losses for farmers.

Example of Agricultural Sector Destruction: “Green Girls” Project

The “Green Girls” project is a women-led agricultural initiative established in Khuza’a, east of Khan Yunis, approximately 500 meters from the Israeli security fence. The project was founded by four Palestinian young women—Nadine Abu Rok, Ghaida Qudeih, Asil, and Khalil—with the aim of economically empowering women and enhancing local food security through open-field farming and greenhouses.

During the Israeli aggression on Gaza between December 2023 and April 2024, Khuza’a was subjected to a large-scale ground invasion, resulting in comprehensive destruction of agricultural infrastructure. This led to the total destruction of the “Green Girls” project, including three dunams of vegetable farmland, three dunams of greenhouses, agricultural equipment, devices, and storage facilities.

Nadine Abu Rok estimates the direct losses of the project at approximately 90,000 USD, in addition to similar losses in another project in the Al-Fukhari area due to destruction and looting.

Following the cessation of military operations in January 2025, Nadine and Ghaida faced significant challenges in attempting to revive the project amidst ongoing power outages, severe shortages of fertilizers and pesticides, rising production costs, and lack of financial and logistical support.

Samah Abu Teir, a widow and mother of five children from Khan Younis, recounts how the potato farms that were her sole source of livelihood were destroyed, forcing her to flee and live in tents without any income.

Farmer Mohammad Qudeih from Khuza'ah indicated that the quantity of rockets and bombs dropped by the occupation forces on the town negatively affected the soil, which lost part of its fertility, thereby adversely impacting the production volume for the current season compared to the previous year.

In light of this catastrophic situation, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has called for urgent agricultural aid to prevent the complete collapse of the agricultural sector and to preserve the remaining agricultural livelihoods, particularly in areas such as Khan Younis.

The destruction of agriculture in Khan Younis is not merely an economic loss; it constitutes a direct threat to the lives and dignity of the population who depend on the land as a source of food and income.

Destruction of Agricultural Lands in Northern Gaza Strip

The agricultural lands in northern Gaza Strip provide more than 60,000 tons of vegetables and field crops, constituting over two-thirds of the food consumed in the Strip.

During the Al-Aqsa Flood War, agricultural lands along the security fence in the northern Strip were bulldozed to a depth reaching 2 kilometers, rendering them out of service. Severe damage was inflicted on the agricultural infrastructure, including wells, greenhouses, and irrigation equipment, resulting in a paralysis of agricultural production.

Approximately 35,000 dunums of agricultural land were bulldozed and destroyed in towns such as Beit Lahia, Beit Hanoun, and eastern Jabalia.

According to assessments by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), about 78% of the agricultural lands in northern Gaza were damaged as of September 2024, the highest percentage among the governorates of the Strip.

Beit Lahia in northern Gaza Strip is one of the most prominent agricultural areas in the Strip. It was known as the "Northern Agricultural Jewel" due to its fertile soil and moderate climate, which made it a primary center for the production of strawberries (the "red gold"), citrus fruits, and various vegetables.

Beit Lahia annually cultivated approximately 30,000 dunums of fruits and vegetables, with an average yield reaching 15 tons per dunum, reflecting the importance of this area in securing food for the Strip's population.

Strawberry cultivation in Beit Lahia has been prominent since the 1960s, with production starting at 1.5 tons annually and expanding to about 17 tons per year, making it a globally sought-after and income-generating crop.

Agriculture in Beit Lahia relied on rainwater and old wells with depths ranging from 10 to 20 meters, in addition to soil rich in organic and mineral substances, which contributed to crop diversity and quality.

Beit Lahia suffered extensive destruction during the Israeli aggression, where agricultural lands were destroyed, trees uprooted, and agricultural infrastructure damaged, transforming the city from a thriving agricultural area into a devastated zone.

Around 40,000 farmers in Beit Lahia lost their source of livelihood, worsening the economic and living conditions of the population.

In June 2024, the Arabia for Nature Protection supported 62 farmers in Beit Lahia to cultivate 169 dunums with crops such as molokhia, eggplant, and hot pepper in an attempt to revive the agricultural sector.

Despite the risks, farmers like Engineer Youssef Abu Rabie have returned to rehabilitate their agricultural lands in Beit Lahia, defying the difficult conditions and the destruction inflicted on the area.

The Mayor of Beit Lahia confirmed that the city is considered the primary food basket for Gaza Strip, where more than 20,000 dunums of agricultural

crops were destroyed, including potatoes, tomatoes, carrots, lettuce, and strawberries that were exported to Europe and the Gulf.

Beit Hanoun in northern Gaza Strip is also among the most prominent agricultural areas in the Strip, known as the "Food Paradise of Gaza" due to its fertile soil and moderate climate, making it a key center for the production of citrus fruits, olives, and various vegetables.

Beit Hanoun annually cultivated thousands of dunums of fruits and vegetables, underscoring the area's importance in securing food for the Strip's population.

The area was renowned for cultivating citrus and olives, in addition to vegetables such as tomatoes and cucumbers, which were exported to local and international markets.

Agriculture in Beit Hanoun depended on rainwater and wells, as well as soil rich in organic and mineral substances, aiding crop diversity and quality.

Beit Hanoun also suffered extensive destruction during the Israeli aggression, with agricultural lands destroyed, trees uprooted, and agricultural infrastructure damaged, turning the city from a thriving agricultural area into a devastated one.

Many farmers in Beit Hanoun lost their livelihoods, exacerbating the economic and living conditions of the population.

Farmer Amer Muslim said: "I have never seen in my life a harsher scene than this, where I saw my land, farm, and life's toil turned into ruin. The land was bulldozed in previous years, but this war destroyed everything green and dry and left us with nothing."

Some local and international institutions have sought to support farmers in Beit Hanoun by providing seeds and agricultural equipment to rehabilitate the damaged lands.

Despite the risks, some farmers have returned to rehabilitate their agricultural lands in Beit Hanoun, defying the difficult conditions and destruction that befell the area.

Destruction of Agricultural Lands in Rafah, Southern Gaza Strip

The cultivated area in Rafah is estimated at approximately 7,500 dunams, planted with various types of crops such as citrus fruits, almonds, and vegetables. More than one thousand citizens are employed in this sector. Agriculture in Rafah has developed and begun to employ modern methods and scientific techniques in cultivation.

Agricultural activity in Rafah began to improve after the 1960s when landowners dug wells, which contributed to the success of citrus farming. Additionally, lands near the seashore were reclaimed, making Rafah's agricultural lands no less important than those of Khan Yunis.

The agricultural lands in Rafah city were subjected to a comprehensive bulldozing campaign as part of the ongoing Israeli incursions and siege. This led to the loss of large areas of cultivated land planted with vegetables and fruits, directly impacting the food security of the local population.

Furthermore, agricultural greenhouses, water wells, and irrigation lines were destroyed, resulting in the complete cessation of agricultural production in some areas.

The Miraj area is considered one of the richest agricultural regions in Rafah and constituted a fundamental pillar in the food basket of the Gaza Strip. It is characterized by the diversity of its crops and the quality of its soil, making it a primary target in the occupation's policies aimed at starving and displacing the population.

Miraj, located in northern Rafah, is among the most severely affected agricultural areas in the Gaza Strip, having been subjected to a fierce attack by the Israeli occupation, which systematically targeted agricultural lands and their associated infrastructure.

The occupation forces commenced extensive bulldozing operations of agricultural lands in Miraj, leading to the loss of vast areas planted with vegetables and fruits.

Israeli attacks also targeted agricultural greenhouses, water wells, and irrigation networks, causing a complete halt to agricultural production in certain locations.

Farmers from the area confirmed that the bulldozing operations led to the loss of their primary source of livelihood, forcing many to flee to other areas after the destruction of their lands.

Farmer Abdulrahman Sheikh Al-Eid from Rafah confirmed that the bulldozing caused him to lose three dunams of agricultural land which was his main source of income, and he was forced to relocate to Khan Yunis after his land was destroyed.

Farmer Hassan Al-Arjan described the destruction of his farm during the 15-month-long war, stating:

“They destroyed agriculture. These crops, as you see, are expensive. We used to supply the market with vegetables like tomatoes and cucumbers. Suddenly, they came and destroyed everything. As you see, tanks and bulldozers arrived and destroyed all the agricultural lands. What harm did these crops like tomatoes and palm trees cause? They uprooted all the palm trees because they do not want people to eat.”

Al-Arjan continued: “They uprooted water pumps, trees, bulldozed the land, greenhouses, and roads, leaving nothing behind. We could not even

escape because they leveled everything to the ground. They want to kill us. And as you see, we are civilians with no connection to anything.”

Meanwhile, farmer Ghaleb Abu Mohsen said: “I have ten dunams of land that were planted with cucumbers and tomatoes, and now, as you see, all ten dunams have disappeared due to bulldozing. We used to harvest tomatoes, cucumbers, and watermelons, but now nothing remains. My family consists of ten members, and now we have nothing left.”

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the ceasefire presents a crucial opportunity to address the catastrophic food crisis by enabling the delivery of emergency aid and initiating early recovery efforts. The organization noted that more than two million people are in urgent need of assistance due to the collapse of agricultural production.

Beth Bechdol, Deputy Director-General of the organization, stated that this is “just the beginning of a long journey to recover from the destruction,” adding that sustainable peace and access will be essential to meet the enormous needs “and ensure that no one in Gaza is left behind.”

Bechdol confirmed FAO’s commitment to ensuring long-term food security in the Gaza Strip, adding that the organization’s recovery efforts will currently prioritize rebuilding agricultural and food infrastructure, such as

greenhouses, wells, solar energy systems, and expanding the delivery of vital agricultural inputs to restore local food production.

The UN official further stated: “These complementary resilience–building measures represent a bridge between short–term activities and long–term development interventions to help communities rebuild, recover from crises, restore hope, and support the right to food.”

Bechdol emphasized that agriculture must be central to emergency and recovery efforts, stressing that immediate work should combine emergency relief—food, water, and medical aid—with the restoration of local food production.

The destruction of the agricultural sector is leading to severe food shortages among Gaza’s population, resulting in famine conditions. According to Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics data, 44% of household consumption of agricultural goods in Gaza is sourced from local production, while the remaining 56% consists of imports, which have ceased due to the war and the imposed blockade.

Abdul Hakim Al–Waer, the regional representative of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for the Near East and North Africa, stated that with almost everyone in Gaza relying on humanitarian aid due to the inability of local producers and farmers to produce, severe

malnutrition cases have emerged, with dire consequences causing chronic diseases, especially among children.

He added: “The absence of fresh animal protein and fresh vegetables will cause significant disabilities and health problems. All this is leading us towards famine.” He also spoke about the private sector in Gaza, which has completely withdrawn and lost everything it had, warning that “its return will not be easy” because the private sector will not return unless there is complete security and full confidence in the market and the overall security situation.

The prohibition of the use of starvation as a weapon against civilians during wartime is a fundamental principle of international humanitarian law, enshrined in several international legal instruments, including Protocol II Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, which forbids the use of starvation as a method of warfare against civilians. International humanitarian law emphasizes the protection of civilians and civilian property during armed conflicts and explicitly prohibits the use of starvation as a pressure tool in conflicts, considering it a violation of international law.

This is the law in its texts, articles, and principles. However, what is occurring before the eyes of the advocates and sponsors of this law is entirely different from what is stipulated or proclaimed in international forums, or when the perpetrator is not the Israeli occupation. Days after

launching its war on the Gaza Strip, the Israeli Minister of War publicly and unequivocally declared the deprivation of all means of life to the Palestinians in Gaza, explicitly mentioning food, water, electricity, and fuel—all essential for human survival, safe access to food, and living a free and dignified life. Palestinians were thus deprived, by that decision publicly announced to the whole world in a flagrant precedent violating all norms and laws, of their full human rights, and subjected to the broadest collective punishment that any occupying force can impose on an entire population, intended to starve millions of Gazans to death, with children comprising more than half of their population, according to reports from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.









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