

Attacking civilians as combatants, BMJ study shows

New BMJ Study of Gaza Injury Patterns Provides Medical Evidence that Israel Systematically Targets Palestinian Civilians as if They Were Combatants

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, September 25, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Patterns of injury seen in Gaza among civilians were similar to those found in trained soldiers in other conflicts, a British Medical Journal (BMJ) study published Friday has shown. A panel of 78 experienced experts documented injury patterns while on deployment in the current Gaza war.

“

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The injury patterns seen among Palestinian civilians in Gaza were “unusually severe”, with injuries suggesting the use of munitions designed for maximum tissue destruction.

Overall, 23,726 trauma-related injuries were reported, of which 18% were burns. Significant injuries were also reported in the head, chest, and limbs. Sixty-seven percent of injuries were explosive and the remainder were gunshot wounds. More than 1 in 10 burns injuries were fourth degree, meaning they penetrated all tissue layers down to the bone. Children in particular suffered severe burns.

The extent of traumatic injury across several areas of the body reflects “the impact of indiscriminate aerial and heavy explosive bombardment in civilian areas”, the study said.

“Firsthand testimony from healthcare workers and victims in Gaza has been vindicated. These findings should ring alarm bells through the halls of government worldwide and the humanitarian community,” said Dr Victoria Rose, one of the journal article's authors.

There were 2,325 patients with firearm injuries, which disproportionately impacted the limbs, often involving areas of the body with major blood vessels, where, “in the absence of surgical resources, amputation was often the only viable solution”. Firearm injuries made up about 30% of war-related trauma, similar to reports from Syria's civil war, where civilians were attacked.

Almost 4 in 10 patients with gunshot injuries in the BMJ study were shot in the limb, with more

than a quarter of these hit in limbs on both sides.

Explosive injuries accounted for some two-thirds of the 6,960 weapons-related traumas, with 28% affecting the head. Just under 10% of gunshot patients were shot in the head.

“This shocking study blows the lid off Israel’s conduct in its genocide in Gaza. The high proportion of gunshot wounds to both limbs proves its military is shooting civilians to maim,” said Dr Nidal Jboor of the Doctors Against Genocide advocacy group.

Malnutrition worsened patient outcomes, with “delayed wound healing and preventable deaths from otherwise treatable conditions”, according to the BMJ article. The study was based on a survey carried out between August 2024 and February 2025. Israel was and continues to severely restrict aid to the Gaza Strip. Last month, the UN-backed IPC panel of food security experts confirmed famine in Gaza City and surrounding areas.

The 78 experts involved in the BMJ study represented 22 non-governmental organisations from Britain, the US, Canada, and European Union member states, working in trauma surgery, emergency medicine, paediatrics, critical care, and anaesthesia. The panel, which had over 100 years’ combined experience as war medics, included Prof. Nick Maynard, Dr Victoria Rose, Prof. Nizam Mamode, and veteran war surgeon David Nott OBE.

The journal article is said to be the first to provide such detailed data from frontline clinicians during the Gaza war.

Pre-print of study: <http://press.psprings.co.uk/bmj/september/injuries.pdf>

Public link to study once embargo lifts: <https://www.bmj.com/content/390/bmj-2025-087524>

Research: Patterns of war related trauma in Gaza observed by international healthcare workers during armed conflict: cross sectional survey. DOI: 10.1136/bmj-2025-087524

Background reading: Thematic report - Indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks during the conflict in Gaza (October – December 2023) | OHCHR

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