

EDUCATION IS NOT A PRIVILEGE; IT IS A RIGHT

Every single child, no matter who they are or where they live, has the same rights as set out by the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the right to life, healthcare, liberty, protection from violence, and an education.

Education is a fundamental human right just as much in times of peace as in times of war, and it is essential to helping each child achieve their full potential. Protecting and ensuring access to education during conflict is also enshrined in international humanitarian law, with specific provisions on the right to education including the protection of students, teachers, educational facilities, resources, and infrastructure.

PALESTINIAN EDUCATION UNDER ATTACK

Since October 2023, education across Palestine has faced devastating attacks by Israeli security forces and settlers at unprecedented levels. **These assaults have undermined the right to education for over 1.5 million children aged 6 to 15 years old.**

The impact of Israel's genocidal war on education is exacerbated by more than 18 years of blockade and recurrent attacks on the Gaza Strip (OCHA, 2025), and compounded by the prolonged Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, for more than 57 years, which the International Court of Justice has deemed unlawful. More broadly, the scale of destruction has unleashed cascading crises (economic, humanitarian, environmental and social), propelling the occupied Palestinian territory from de-development to utter ruin (UNCTAD, 2025).

The extent of the damage and disruption to Palestine's education system underscores the urgent need to protect and restore the right to education, for an urgent, permanent and just ceasefire, and for an immediate end to Israel's illegal occupation, military operations, and settler attacks against education.

"We want to live like children in other countries who can play in playgrounds instead of hiding from bombs. We want Gaza to be a safe and beautiful place where we can live in peace."

"We want to learn and play, and study all subjects as we did before."

– Quotes from children in Gaza interviewed by Save the Children and UNRWA

WEST BANK

In the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Palestinian children and young people have been pursuing their education in the face of violence and harassment from Israeli forces and settlers, home and school demolitions, movement restrictions and checkpoints, among other occupation-enforced challenges (UNHRC).

Palestinian teachers and students are being killed, injured, arbitrarily detained and arrested at unprecedented rates.

1,049 Palestinians, including at least 229 children, have been killed between 7 Oct 2023 - 16 Jan 2026 (OCHA).

Daily commutes to school for students and teachers are fraught with risks due to Israeli checkpoints, roadblocks and unprovoked settler violence, fundamentally undermining the right to education along with compounding trauma and stress among children.

Due to the extreme difficulties faced by students and teachers in reaching their schools, the major occupation-enforced restrictions on schools in East Jerusalem, as well as the financial crisis of the Palestinian Authority caused by Israel's illegal withholding of Palestinian Tax Revenues, teaching days have been reduced to just 3 days per week and teachers are not able to be paid their full salaries.

Increasingly, schools now stock supplies like snacks and blankets for students, as well as protective gear for staff, including helmets and bullet-proof vests, so they can keep students sheltering in schools for longer hours when necessary.

Approx. 600,000 children are in need of child protection services and mental health and psychosocial support.

GAZA STRIP

"Before this war, Palestinians in Gaza had some of the highest literacy rates in the world. Education was a source of pride, resilience and progress for generations."- UNICEF Spokesperson

Almost two and a half years of attacks on Gaza's schooling have left an entire generation at risk.

60% of school-aged children in Gaza currently have no access to in-person learning.

Over 90% of schools have been damaged or destroyed (UNICEF, 2026)

As of 1 Oct 2025, 18,069 school students and 780 education staff has been killed in Gaza, and a further 26,391 students and 3,211 teachers injured (UN OCHA).

Over 335,000 children under five are now at risk of severe developmental delays because early childhood services have collapsed.

Save the Children estimates that 15 children suffered life-altering injuries every day during Israel's assault on Gaza, and 10 children per day lost one or both legs.

Gaza is now home to the highest number of child amputees per capita worldwide.

More than 21,000 children have been injured, including around 5,230 who are in urgent need of rehabilitation.

More than 58,000 children have lost one or both parents.

Nearly all of Gaza's 1.1 million children are in need mental health and psychological support for anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts (UNICEF, 2025).

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RESTORING EDUCATION RESTORES POSSIBILITY

“Gaza has one of the strongest literacy traditions in the world. The engineers who will rebuild water systems, the doctors who will save lives, the teachers who will steady the next generation – they all come from a proud culture of learning. [Restoring access to education] isn’t then just about survival. It’s about protecting the engine of Gaza’s future.”

– UNICEF Spokesperson James Elder, 2026

The temporary ceasefire in the Gaza Strip between 19 January and 18 March 2025 enabled education provision to increase rapidly in scope and scale, despite the huge devastation and destruction of most education infrastructure. A total of 570 temporary learning spaces were established during the ceasefire, serving 249,000 learners (UNICEF). This reality provides a small glimmer of hope by showing that educational recovery is possible and that with even minimal stability, the system can mobilise quickly, reach large numbers of children, and combine academic learning with psychosocial support.

Safeguarding the right to education and rebuilding the education system cannot be achieved without an end to daily bombings and raids, hunger, military occupation, blockade, movement restrictions, prolonged displacement, and the killing and injuring of civilians.

Fulfilling the obligation of the international community to the right to education requires expending all efforts for achieving a permanent ceasefire and just peace. The international community needs affirm Palestinian statehood and support Palestinian-led efforts to rebuild their society and education systems by providing the necessary resources to fully meet educational needs.

“The most important message to the international community is that this is the time to end the occupation. Everything after that will be solved. The problem is 75 years old because of the occupation. End the occupation to give Palestinians their rights. This is the only message we have to send all over the world.”

– Palestinian Teacher, 2025

FIND OUT MORE :



“Gaza school: before and after
October 2023”
UNRWA (January 2026)



“Palestinian Education Still Under Attack”
Report by University of Cambridge, Centre for
Lebanese Studies, & UNRWA (January 2026)



“Through a Child's Eyes”
Defense for Children International
- Palestine (February 2025)