

50 Days: More than 500 Children: Facts and figures on fatalities in Gaza, Summer 2014

btselem.org/press_releases/20160720_fatalities_in_gaza_conflict_2014

The figures were corrected on 19 Sept. 2016, based on new research.

1391, or 63%, of the 2,202 Palestinians killed by Israeli security forces in Operation "Protective Edge" did not take part in the hostilities. Of these, 526 – a quarter of all Palestinians killed in the operation – were children under eighteen years of age. These are some of the figures published today by Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem to mark two years since the operation, which took place in July-August 2014. Additionally, 17 children were killed while participating in the hostilities, and for an additional 3, B'Tselem was unable to ascertain whether they had taken part in the hostilities. Of the 72 Israelis killed in the operation, six were civilians (one of them a Thai national), including a four-year-old child, and 62 were soldiers killed by Palestinians. Three soldiers were killed by other soldiers, and one in an operational accident.



B'Tselem's data are based on a meticulous, exhaustive investigation carried out by the organization's field researchers in Gaza, which were cross referenced with other publicly available sources. The information is also available in an [interactive format](#) that enables searches by age, gender, location, and other criteria.

The high number of civilian fatalities – including women, children, and the elderly – casts doubt on Israel's claim that all the targets were legitimate and that the military adhered to the principle of proportionality during the attacks and took precautions to reduce harm to civilians. While the fighting was still in progress, B'Tselem already cautioned against the predictable lethal consequences of the military's open-fire policy, which included air strikes on homes that killed many civilians who were not taking part in the hostilities (see B'Tselem report [Black Flag](#)). Decision makers continued to apply this policy, in spite of these results.

Of the Palestinians killed who did not take part in the hostilities, 180 were babies, toddlers, and children under the age of six. Another 346 were children from age six through seventeen, and 247 were women between the ages of 18 and 59. Another 113 were men and women over the age of sixty.

B'Tselem's investigation found that 765 of the Palestinians killed by Israeli security forces were taking part in the

hostilities at the time of their death, or held a continuous combat function in an armed group in the Gaza Strip. Regarding another 46, B'Tselem was unable to ascertain whether they had taken part in the hostilities.

Over the course of two days that came to be known as "Black Friday" (1 and 2 August), Israeli security forces killed 207 people, including 154 civilians who were not taking part in the hostilities, in Rafah (including refugee camps Rafah, Shaburah, and Bsheit). Of the latter, 64 were children and 36 were women (over the age of 18). 50 of the Palestinians killed took part in the hostilities, including 3 children, and Regarding another 3, B'Tselem was unable to ascertain whether they had taken part in the hostilities.

In two days of fighting in a-Shuja'iyeh neighborhood in Gaza City (19 and 20 July), Israeli security forces killed 134 Palestinians, including 78 who were not taking part in the hostilities. Of these, 26 were minors and 19 were women (over the age of 18). 55 of the Palestinians killed were taking part in the hostilities, including 2 minors. Regarding one person, B'Tselem was unable to ascertain whether he was taking part in the hostilities.

The Israeli government almost totally shirked its responsibility for the massive harm to civilians in the operation, casting all blame upon Hamas. Indeed, Hamas and other armed groups operating in the Gaza Strip violated international humanitarian law, for example by aiming rocket attacks at Israeli civilians and by launching them from within densely populated areas. However, the argument that this justified any military response, regardless of the consequences, is unreasonable, as one party breaching the law does not permit its opponent to do the same.

Furthermore, the argument focuses solely on the stated claims of policy makers – which cannot be examined – while ignoring the lethal results of their actions, even though those results recurred time and again. In reality, several days into the operation, the consequences of this policy were eminently predictable. Israeli decision-makers chose to ignore this fact and continue the same policy line, making them fully responsible – both morally and legally – for the extreme harm to civilians.