



# Education denied in Gaza

The blockade has a devastating impact on students of all ages in Gaza.

Each year, thousands of college-age students are effectively barred from finishing their education because they're denied permission to leave Gaza to study in the West Bank or elsewhere. Students aren't even allowed to leave when there's no program in Gaza for their area of study.<sup>1</sup> And if a student receives a visa to travel internationally, including to the United States, there's no guarantee that they will receive permission from Israel to leave.

In rare cases when students are able to leave, they often can't return to visit their families while pursuing their studies, for fear they won't be permitted to leave again.

The blockade has also deprived students in Gaza's education system. During the 2014 attacks on Gaza, 252 schools were damaged and seven were destroyed. Although the damaged schools were repaired within two years, educational equipment and materials have not all been replaced. And only one destroyed school was reconstructed during the same period.

What's more, Gaza needs to create 200 additional schools to meet the needs of a growing population, but these schools can't be constructed because of Israel's restrictions on importing building materials. This shortage of schools has led to severe overcrowding in most Gaza schools, many of which operate with "two shifts"—hosting one school in the morning and another in the afternoon.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Gisha, "Student travel between Gaza and the West Bank 101" <http://gisha.org/publication/1666>

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2 Human Rights Watch "Gaza's Education in Rubble" Sept. 12, 2014, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/09/12/gazas-education-rubble>

## Quick Facts

- During the 2014 Israeli attacks on Gaza, 252 schools were damaged and seven were destroyed by Israeli airstrikes. Educational facilities are protected spaces under international law.<sup>3</sup>
- Since September 2000, Israel has banned all movement between Gaza and the West Bank by students and academics, taking away Gaza residents' choice to obtain degrees in fields not offered by universities in Gaza.<sup>4</sup>
- Students wishing to study in international institutions are frequently denied the right to travel, even if they have visas from host countries and support from international educational institutions.
- Nearly all—94 percent—of Gaza's public schools are forced to offer "two shifts" a day, cutting educational opportunities in half for its students, due to the severe school shortage.<sup>5</sup>
- At various points during the 10 years of the blockade, Israel has banned the import of basic school supplies into Gaza, including textbooks, pencils, lab equipment, computers, and paper.<sup>6</sup>
- Over 160,000 children in Gaza are estimated to be in need of continuous psychosocial support, which impacts education.<sup>7</sup>

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3 United Nations, General Assembly, Promotion and protection of the rights of children, Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General, A/70/836 (20 April, 2016), available from [undocs.org/A/70/836](http://undocs.org/A/70/836).

4 "Student Travel Between Gaza and the West Bank 101," Gisha (September 2012). <http://gisha.org/publication/1666>

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5 "Education in the Gaza Strip," UNRWA.org.

6 Restrictions on the transfer of goods to Gaza: Obstruction and obfuscation, Gisha (January 2010).

7 UN OCHA, "Factsheet - Gaza: Two years since the 2014 hostilities", August 2016 <http://www.ochaopt.org/content/gaza-two-years-2014-hostilities-august-2016>

# What can you do?

## **Demand an immediate end to the blockade on Gaza.**

U.S. government policy officially supports Israel's continued blockade on Gaza—and it is this blockade that has resulted in this crisis facing Gaza's population. The blockade is illegal and immoral and must end.

Contact your government representatives, and demand that they call for an immediate change in U.S. government policy and support the complete end to Israel's blockade on Gaza.

Take action: [afsc.org/endtheblockade](https://afsc.org/endtheblockade)



**American Friends  
Service Committee**

**The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)** is a Quaker organization that includes people of various faiths who are committed to social justice, peace, and humanitarian service. Its work is based on the Quaker belief in the worth of every person and faith in the power of love to overcome violence and injustice. Since 1948, AFSC has worked in the U.S., Israel, and the occupied Palestinian territory with Palestinians, Israelis, and other committed activists to support nonviolence, challenge oppression, and—since 1970—to end Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territory. This work is guided by our "Principles for a Just and Lasting Peace in Palestine and Israel." These principles support the implementation of international human rights and humanitarian law and call for an end to Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territory, implementation of refugees' right of return, equality, and justice for Palestinians and Israelis. More: [afsc.org](https://afsc.org)

### LEARN MORE

The following organizations in the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel address and challenge Israel's policies on Gaza:

**Al-Mezan**  
[www.mezan.org/en](https://www.mezan.org/en)

**Palestinian Center for Human Rights**  
[www.pchrgaza.org/portal/en](https://www.pchrgaza.org/portal/en)

**Gaza Community and Mental Health Program**  
[www.gcmhp.net/en](https://www.gcmhp.net/en)

**B'Tselem**  
[www.btselem.org](https://www.btselem.org)

**Gisha**  
[www.gisha.org](https://www.gisha.org)

**The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs**  
[www.ochaopt.org](https://www.ochaopt.org)