



Fact Sheet:

Status of the Poultry Sector in the Gaza Strip Amid the Genocide

Agricultural Sector

Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network (PNGO)

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Introduction

This fact sheet examines the condition of the poultry sector in the Gaza Strip following the extensive destruction it has sustained since the escalation of hostilities on 7 October 2023. It provides a brief overview of the sector before the war, the scale of damage to its productive assets, and the resulting impacts on food security and livelihoods. It also identifies key response gaps and outlines priorities for humanitarian action and early recovery.

The poultry sector is a critical component of both food security and the local economy in Gaza. It plays a central role in the supply of eggs and poultry products, supporting the livelihoods of thousands of households. Before 7 October 2023, the sector met a significant share of local demand through an established network of farms, hatcheries, and feed production facilities.

Since the onset of the genocide, the sector has experienced widespread and severe damage. Large numbers of birds have been lost, production has been largely halted, and essential infrastructure has been destroyed or rendered inoperable. This has resulted in a sharp decline in the availability of key food items and a significant loss of income for those dependent on the sector, creating urgent and immediate needs for intervention.

This paper highlights the current conditions of the poultry sector and egg hatcheries in the Gaza Strip, outlines the main losses incurred, and underscores the need to prioritize poultry production systems and hatcheries within humanitarian response and early recovery efforts in the agricultural and food security sectors.

The Poultry Sector before the Genocide

Before the latest escalation, the poultry sector constituted a key pillar of food security in the Gaza Strip and played a significant role in meeting a large share of local demand. The Gaza Strip was largely self-sufficient in the production of poultry, fresh eggs, and other related food products, reducing reliance on imports for these commodities¹. According to 2022 data from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the agricultural sector, including livestock, contributed approximately 11 per cent of Gaza's Gross Domestic Product and provided employment opportunities for thousands of individuals engaged in poultry farming and related industries².

Production Capacity

Available data indicate that, before the war, the Gaza Strip was home to approximately 2,500 broiler farms producing around 22 million broiler chickens annually. In addition, there were around 250-layer farms, primarily concentrated in Gaza City, North Gaza, and Khan Younis, with an annual production of approximately 200 million eggs, largely sufficient to meet local market demand. The sector also included between 350 and 400 turkey farms, producing close to one million birds annually.

¹ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). (5 August 2024). *Restricted local food production exacerbates the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip*. <https://www.fao.org/newsroom/story/restricted-local-food-production-exacerbates-the-humanitarian-crisis-in-the-gaza-strip/ar>

² (PCBS). (28 November 2023) <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/postar.aspx?lang=ar&ItemID=4644>

The pre-war production system also included established hatchery capacities integrated into the production cycle. Approximately 36 million hatching eggs were used annually, contributing to the production of around 22 million broiler chickens each year. In the turkey subsector, an estimated 1.6 million hatching eggs were used annually. In total, Gaza had 22 hatcheries with an estimated annual capacity of around 40 million hatching eggs, in addition to five feed mills producing approximately 35,000 tonnes of animal feed per year³.



Overall, before October 2023, the poultry sector played a central role in supplying most of the population's needs for white meat and eggs locally, with only limited reliance on imports within the production cycle.

The Poultry Sector amid the Genocide

The war launched by Israel on the Gaza Strip on 7 October 2023 has caused catastrophic damage to the poultry sector. Productive infrastructure has been widely destroyed, and production has come to a near-complete halt. The Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture has described the situation as a 100 per cent shutdown of animal production, including the poultry sector⁴. The sector has sustained major losses, including:

- Destruction of farms and loss of birds:** Most poultry farms have been destroyed due to direct bombardment and the lack of essential inputs, resulting in the loss of approximately 90 per cent of broiler chickens. Similarly, around 90 per cent of layer hens, estimated at approximately 850,000 birds, have been lost due to attacks, disruption of care, and the collapse of feed supply, leading to an estimated loss of around 250 million eggs annually that these birds previously produced. In addition, the turkey subsector has completely collapsed, with all turkey farms destroyed and approximately one million birds lost annually⁵.



Poultry farm after the war – Source: Agricultural Association for Hatcheries, Poultry and Feed

³ Interview with Mr. Majed Jarada, Director of the Agricultural Association for Hatcheries, Poultry and Feed. (24 December 2025).

⁴ Al Jazeera. (12 April 2025). *Israel destroys food security in Gaza and devastates 90 per cent of its agricultural land.* <https://www.aljazeera.net/politics>

⁵ Agricultural Development Association (PARC). (January 2025). *Fact Sheet: The Impact of the Israeli War of Genocide on the Agricultural Sector in the Gaza Governorates.* <https://pal-arc.org/uploads/17410013311613331032.pdf>

Furthermore, more than 300,000 household poultry birds have been killed because of bombardment across the Gaza Strip⁶.

- **Destruction of hatcheries and feed mills:** Critical production infrastructure has been severely impacted, with 20 out of 22 hatcheries in Gaza destroyed. These hatcheries previously produced approximately 40 million hatching eggs annually. In addition, all five feed mills in the Gaza Strip have been destroyed, eliminating an estimated annual production of 35,000 tonnes of animal feed and completely disrupting local feed supply for poultry and other livestock.⁷
- **Collapse of production:** As a result of this widespread destruction, the production of poultry meat and eggs has come to a complete halt across the Gaza Strip during the war. Fresh poultry products are no longer available in the local market. Reports indicate that no more than 1 per cent of the poultry population remains, meaning that approximately 99 per cent of poultry assets have been lost⁸.
- **Severe economic losses:** The Ministry of Agriculture estimates total losses in the animal production sector at approximately USD 232 million because of the offensive, including losses in poultry and other livestock⁹.
- **Loss of livelihoods:** The poultry sector was a major source of income for thousands of households, providing both direct and indirect employment across multiple value chains, including farmers, veterinarians, and feed traders. The near-total destruction of the sector has led to widespread loss of livelihoods, further exacerbating the economic and social crisis and contributing to rising unemployment.

Indicator	Pre-7 October 2023	During the Genocide
Total Broiler Chickens	Production of 36 million birds annually	Loss of approximately 90% of broiler chickens
Total Layer Hens	850,000-layer hens producing ~250 million eggs annually	Loss of ~90% of layer hens and ~250 million eggs annually
Hatcheries	22 hatcheries producing ~40 million hatching eggs annually	Destruction of 20 hatcheries and loss of ~40 million hatching eggs
Turkeys	150 farms raising ~1 million birds annually ¹⁰	Loss of ~1 million turkeys

⁶ Al Jazeera. (12 April 2025). *Israel destroys food security in Gaza and devastates 90 per cent of its agricultural land.* (previously cited)

<https://www.aljazeera.net/politics>

⁷ PARC (January 2025). *Fact Sheet: The Impact of the Israeli War of Genocide on the Agricultural Sector in the Gaza Governorates.* (previously cited) | <https://pal-arc.org/uploads/17410013311613331032.pdf>)

⁸ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). (3 October 2024). *Gaza geospatial data shows intensifying damage to cropland.* <https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/gaza-geospatial-data-shows-intensifying-damage-to-cropland/ar>

⁹ Al Jazeera. (12 April 2025). *Israel destroys food security in Gaza and devastates 90 per cent of its agricultural land.*

<https://www.aljazeera.net/politics>

¹⁰ Al Jazeera. (12 April 2025). <https://www.aljazeera.net/politics>

Destruction of the Poultry Sector and Its Impact on Food Security in the Gaza Strip

The genocide has led to the near-total collapse of livestock resources in the Gaza Strip, with direct and severe consequences for the food security situation of the population. According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis, 22 per cent of the population has reached Phase 5 (Famine/Catastrophe), while more than half a million people are facing an imminent risk of famine¹¹. As of 18 August 2025, the Palestinian Ministry of Health reported 263 deaths due to hunger and malnutrition, including 112 children¹².

At the same time, Israeli-imposed restrictions on the Gaza Strip have significantly limited the entry of food commodities. The entry of fresh meat and eggs has been effectively blocked, as well as the entry of live poultry. Only limited quantities of frozen meat have been allowed intermittently. This has led to an unprecedented increase in the price of frozen meat, placing it beyond the reach of most households¹³.

Key Challenges Facing the Poultry Sector in the Post-War Period¹⁴

Following the entry into force of the ceasefire in October 2025, limited efforts have been initiated to restore operations using the remaining capacities of the sector. However, these efforts continue to face major constraints that hinder any meaningful recovery. Key challenges include:

- **Electricity and fuel shortages:** Prolonged power outages and the acute shortage of fuel required to operate generators have severely disrupted the functioning of hatcheries and farms. Egg incubation and chick rearing depend on a stable electricity supply or sufficient fuel for heating and lighting. In addition, the shortage of gas, which is essential for heating poultry houses, has further complicated recovery efforts.
- **Shortages of feed and water:** The war has caused a complete breakdown of feed supply chains due to the destruction of local feed mills and restrictions on the entry of feed from outside Gaza. This has resulted in a severe feed crisis, leading to the death of remaining birds due to starvation. In parallel, more than 87 per cent of irrigation wells have been damaged because of bombardment and military operations, making access to clean water for farms extremely limited¹⁵.
- **Lack of veterinary medicines and services:** Supply chains have been fully disrupted due to the blockade and prevailing security conditions, leading to critical shortages of veterinary medicines and vaccines necessary for disease

¹¹ Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) *Country analysis – Gaza Strip*. | <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/>

¹² Al Jazeera. (18 August 2024). | <https://www.aljazeera.net>

¹³ Amnesty International. (3 July 2025). *Gaza: Evidence points to Israel's continued use of starvation to inflict genocide against Palestinians*.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/07/gaza-evidence-points-to-israels-continued-use-of-starvation-to-inflict-genocide-against-palestinians/>

¹⁴ Interview with Mr. Majed Jarada, Director of the Agricultural Association for Hatcheries, Poultry and Feed. (24 December 2025). (previously cited)

¹⁵ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). (3 October 2024). *Gaza geospatial data shows intensifying damage to cropland* <https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/gaza-geospatial-data-shows-intensifying-damage-to-cropland/ar>

prevention and treatment. In addition, veterinary extension and support services have largely ceased under the current logistical and security constraints, increasing health risks and undermining recovery prospects.

Response Capacities in the Early Recovery Phase

Despite the extensive destruction affecting the poultry sector and the ongoing constraints, current estimates indicate the potential for the partial reactivation of approximately 250 poultry farms. In addition, around 50 turkey farms remain structurally standing; however, they require comprehensive rehabilitation due to the significant damage sustained. Many of these facilities are currently being used as shelters for displaced populations¹⁶, which further complicates their restoration but also highlights their relevance within early recovery planning.

This presents a potential entry point for early recovery interventions, particularly if minimum operational requirements can be secured, most notably access to alternative energy sources. Supporting the rehabilitation and reactivation of these farms could enable the resumption of limited local poultry production, thereby reducing full reliance on food assistance and supporting a gradual transition from humanitarian relief towards recovery and development pathways.

‘Subject to the entry of alternative energy sources, such as solar power systems or sufficient fuel to operate generators, the remaining hatcheries in the Gaza Strip could be brought back into operation. The reactivation of these hatcheries could enable the production of up to approximately 50 per cent of local market demand for broiler chickens¹⁷’.

Systematic Destruction in Violation of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law

The widespread and systematic destruction of the poultry sector in the Gaza Strip constitutes a serious violation of international humanitarian law (IHL), in particular Article 55 of the Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions¹⁸, which obliges the protection of the natural environment against widespread, long-term, and severe damage. It also violates the principle of distinction set out in Article 48 of the same Protocol, as well as Article 52, which protects civilian objects. The poultry sector and agricultural infrastructure are civilian objects that must not be targeted unless and for such time as they become military objectives, which has not been demonstrated.

Furthermore, the use of starvation as a method of warfare constitutes a war crime under Article 8(2)(b)(xxv) of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, as well as Article 54 of Additional Protocol I. The destruction of the poultry sector, combined with restrictions on the entry of food and agricultural inputs, has resulted in documented

¹⁶ Interview with Mr. Majed Jarada, Director of the Agricultural Association for Hatcheries, Poultry and Feed. (24 December 2025). *(previously cited)*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). *Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions*. <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ar/ihl-treaties/api-1977?activeTab=>

deaths due to hunger and malnutrition, warranting scrutiny of these acts as potential international crimes.

From a human rights perspective, these actions amount to serious violations of Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which guarantees the right to adequate food, and Article 12, which guarantees the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. The deprivation of food for civilians also constitutes a violation of Article 23 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Moreover, the documented deaths resulting from hunger and malnutrition (263 cases, including 112 children) constitute a grave violation of Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which protects the right to life.

In light of the orders issued by the International Court of Justice in the case brought by South Africa against the State of Israel, which emphasized the obligation to ensure the provision of humanitarian assistance and food to the population in Gaza, the continued restrictions on the entry of essential agricultural inputs (including feed, veterinary medicines, fuel, and solar equipment) may constitute a breach of legally binding provisional measures.

This destruction directly threatens the right to food and the livelihoods of Palestinian households and stands in clear contradiction to the fundamental principles enshrined in international human rights law, including the right to adequate food, environmental security, and the right to live with dignity.

Recommendations

I. General Recommendations for Response and Recovery

- **Prioritize the poultry sector** within humanitarian response and agricultural relief plans, given its central role in strengthening local food security, supporting livelihoods, and contributing to the economy.
- **Rehabilitate productive infrastructure** by rebuilding and restoring farms, hatcheries, and feed mills, and by supporting affected farmers to enable the gradual and sustainable resumption of production cycles.
- **Ensure the immediate and unimpeded entry of essential production inputs**, including feed, veterinary medicines and vaccines, fuel, and alternative energy sources such as solar panels, as critical enablers of recovery.
- **Undertake comprehensive and systematic documentation of damages and losses** affecting the poultry sector, as a basis for accountability and compensation processes, and to ensure the sector is prioritized in national and international recovery and reconstruction efforts.
- **Support and strengthen local civil society organizations** as key partners in implementing agricultural recovery programmes, ensuring coordinated, sustainable interventions and contributing to the development of a resilient local food system.

II. Recommendations Related to International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights

- **Pursue international legal accountability** through the documentation of grave violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law affecting the poultry sector and agricultural infrastructure and refer these cases to the International Criminal Court and other independent international investigative mechanisms, as potential war crimes and crimes against humanity that may amount to genocide.
- **Call on the international community**, including States parties to the Geneva Conventions, to uphold their obligations under Common Article 1 to ensure respect for international humanitarian law by the occupying Power, and to take effective measures to end the use of starvation as a method of warfare and ensure the immediate and unconditional entry of agricultural inputs.
- **Integrate the right to food as a core priority** within reconstruction efforts and promote the rebuilding of the agricultural and poultry sectors through a rights-based approach that recognizes food security as a fundamental human right, rather than a form of humanitarian assistance.
- **Strengthen accountability mechanisms at national and international levels**, including by building the capacity of national institutions to document violations and prepare legal case files for litigation before domestic and international courts.

Conclusion

The destruction of the poultry sector in the Gaza Strip is not merely an economic loss; it forms part of a broader pattern that undermines the ability of the civilian population to survive. It constitutes a violation of fundamental human rights, including the right to life, the right to food, the right to health, and the right to an adequate standard of living. In the context of continued international inaction to halt these violations, the role of civil society organizations and human rights networks becomes increasingly critical. Their efforts in documentation, legal action, and advocacy are essential to ensuring accountability and preventing impunity. At the same time, early recovery efforts must be grounded in a rights-based approach that upholds dignity and advances justice for the Palestinian people.