

Israeli Damage to Archives, Libraries, and Museums in Gaza, October 2023–January 2024

A Preliminary Report from Librarians and Archivists with Palestine

The destruction of cultural heritage in Gaza impoverishes the collective identity of the Palestinian people, irrevocably denies them their history, and violates their sovereignty. In this report, we offer a partial list of archives, libraries, and museums in Gaza that have been destroyed, damaged, or looted by Israeli armed forces since October 7, 2023. This report is necessarily incomplete. It is very difficult to determine the status of archives, libraries, and museums in Gaza during the ongoing Israeli bombardment. Current conditions in Gaza, such as the targeting of journalists, frequent communication blackouts, and extensive damage to the built environment pose an immediate threat to safety. Moreover, archivists and librarians have been repeatedly displaced, injured, or killed, making it even more difficult to take stock of the damage to cultural heritage. As a result, it should be assumed that this report represents only a fraction of the extent of damage and death, not a complete picture.

We compile and offer this information with the understanding that the erasure of Palestinian culture and history has long been an Israeli tactic of war and occupation, a means to further limit the self-determination of the Palestinian people. In 1948, during the Nakba, 30,000 books and manuscripts were [looted from Palestinian homes](#); in 1982, during Israel's invasion of Lebanon, Israel [looted and confiscated the library and archives of the Palestine Liberation Organization](#); libraries and archives were [damaged during the Second Intifada](#), and have been [repeatedly targeted](#) in Gaza. Furthermore, the intentional destruction of cultural heritage has been [recognized as a war crime](#) and prosecuted in the International Criminal Court.

This report joins those issued by [Heritage for Peace](#) (November 7, 2023), the [Palestinian Ministry of Culture](#) (December 6, 2023), the [Arab Regional Group at the International Council of Monuments and Sites](#) (January 9, 2024), and

others. These reports document the destruction of religious sites, archaeological evidence, cultural institutions, and more. We bring a focus on libraries, archives, and museums as sites of knowledge, community spaces, and repositories of cultural heritage. Irreplaceable historic materials have been lost in the destruction of institutions such as the Central Archives of Gaza City and the Rafah Museum. The destruction of libraries represents the loss of not only book collections, but the efforts of Gaza’s librarians to acquire, care for, and provide access to reading materials, despite Israel’s ongoing blockade of the Gaza Strip.

Finally, we include information about the librarians and archivists who have been killed in the ongoing Israeli bombardment. We mourn the deaths of our colleagues and their families.

Librarians and Archivists with Palestine

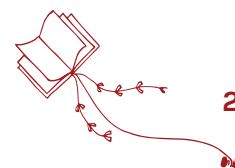
February 1, 2024

Contents

Archives and Rare Books	3
Libraries	4
University Libraries	7
Museums	9
Martyred Information Workers	11

Founded in 2013, Librarians and Archivists with Palestine (LAP) is an all-volunteer network of self-defined librarians, archivists, and information workers in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle for self-determination. To learn more about our work, [visit our website](#).

Contact: librarians2palestine@gmail.com



Central Archives of Gaza City, Gaza City Hall (Gaza City)

Description of damage: Complete destruction from direct shelling, causing a fire which fully destroyed the archives. The archives contained 150 years of records pertaining to Gaza's history.

Date of damage: Unknown, first reported November 29, 2023

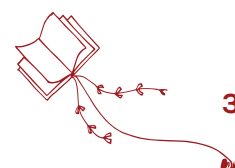
Sources:

- ["Israel destroyed Central Archives of Gaza City': Head of Gaza Municipality," Middle East Monitor](#), November 29, 2023.
- Majed, Mohammed. ["Israel destroyed Central Archives of Gaza City': Head of Gaza municipality," Anadolu Ajansi](#), November 29, 2023.
- Crean, Rosabel. ["Gaza heritage at threat as Israel bombs municipal buildings, old city," New Arab](#), November 30, 2023.
- ["Gaza's Central Archives building lies in ruins after Israeli air strike," Middle East Eye YouTube](#), November 30, 2023.
- Palestinian Ministry of Culture. [The Second Preliminary Report on the Cultural Sector Damage](#), December 6, 2023, pg 35.
- Osman, Nadda. ["Israel-Palestine war: Israeli forces destroy central archive of Gaza City," Middle East Eye](#), December 7, 2023.
- Akkad, Dania. ["100 days of war in Gaza: More than 23,000 dead and a society in ruins," Middle East Eye](#), January 13, 2024.

Omari Mosque and Library (Gaza City)

Description of damage: Mosque was completely destroyed, likely including the library. The mosque was built in the 7th century, and contained one of the most significant collections of rare books in Palestine, including works dating to the 14th century. Over 200 manuscripts from the library's holdings were [digitized in 2022](#).

Date of damage: December 8, 2023



Sources:

- Saber, Indlieb Farazi. [“A ‘cultural genocide’: Which of Gaza’s heritage sites have been destroyed?”](#) *Al Jazeera*, January 14, 2024.
- Mulder, Stephennie. [“Gaza’s oldest mosque destroyed by Israeli airstrike,”](#) *Business Insider*, January 21, 2024. (Also published in [The Conversation](#) on January 17, 2024).

Libraries

Diana Tamari Sabbagh Library in the Rashad al-Shawa Cultural Center (Al-Rimal, Gaza City)

Description of damage: Complete destruction by Israeli shelling, including the destruction of tens of thousands of books in the Tamari Sabbagh Library. The building had been sheltering hundreds of displaced Palestinians.

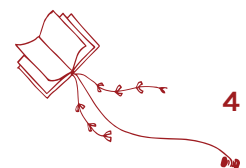
Date of damage: November 25, 2023

Sources:

- Majed, Mohammed. [“Israel destroyed Central Archives of Gaza City’: Head of Gaza municipality,”](#) *Anadolu Ajansi*, November 29, 2023.
- El Chamaa, Mohamad. [“Gazans mourn loss of their libraries: Cultural beacons and communal spaces,”](#) *The Washington Post*, November 30, 2023.
- Roche, Daniel. [“Reports by United Nations and Heritage for Peace reveal many destroyed or damaged cultural heritage sites in Gaza,”](#) *The Architect’s Newspaper*, December 14, 2023.
- Akkad Dania. [“100 days of war in Gaza: More than 23,000 dead and a society in ruins,”](#) *Middle East Eye*, January 13, 2024.
- Saber, Indlieb Farazi. [“A ‘cultural genocide’: Which of Gaza’s heritage sites have been destroyed?”](#) *Al Jazeera*, January 14, 2024.

Enaim Library

Description of damage: Destroyed



Date of damage: Unknown, first reported December 6, 2023

Sources:

- Palestinian Ministry of Culture. [*The Second Preliminary Report on the Cultural Sector Damage*](#), December 6, 2023, pg 34.

Gaza Municipal Library (Gaza City)

Description of damage: Building caught fire, causing significant damage.

Date of damage: Unknown, first reported November 27, 2023

Sources:

- Sheehan, Dan. [*Gaza's main public library has been destroyed by Israeli bombing*](#)," *Lithub.com*, November 27, 2023.
- Osman, Nadda. [*Israel-Palestine war: Gaza's main public library destroyed in Israeli bombing*](#)," *Middle East Eye*, November 28, 2023.
- El Chamaa, Mohamad. [*Gazans mourn loss of their libraries: Cultural beacons and communal spaces*](#)," *The Washington Post*, November 30, 2023.
- Palestinian Ministry of Culture. [*The Second Preliminary Report on the Cultural Sector Damage*](#), December 6, 2023, pg 35.
- Moustafa, Laila Hussein. [*Opinion: When libraries like Gaza's are destroyed, what's lost is far more than books*](#)," *LA Times*, December 12, 2023.

Kana'an Educational Development Institute (Al-Rimal, Gaza City)

Description of damage: Destroyed, including a community library.

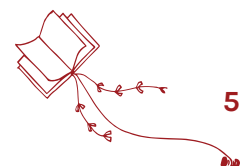
Date of damage: Unknown, first reported December 6, 2023

Sources:

- Palestinian Ministry of Culture. [*The Second Preliminary Report on the Cultural Sector Damage*](#), December 6, 2023, pg 46.

Lubud Library

Description of damage: Destroyed



Date of damage: Unknown, first reported December 6, 2023

Sources:

- Palestinian Ministry of Culture. [*The Second Preliminary Report on the Cultural Sector Damage*](#), December 6, 2023, pg 34.

Al-Nahda Library

Description of damage: Destroyed

Date of damage: Unknown, first reported December 6, 2023

Sources:

- Palestinian Ministry of Culture. [*The Second Preliminary Report on the Cultural Sector Damage*](#), December 6, 2023, pg 34.

Samir Mansour Bookshop and Library (Gaza City)

Description of damage: Severely Damaged

Date of damage: October 10, 2023

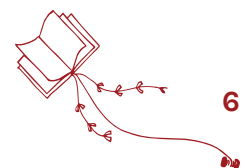
Sources:

- Samir Mansour Bookshop and Library, [Post on Instagram](#), October 10, 2023.
- Zakaria, Sherouk. "[Gaza's iconic bookshop damaged again in Israeli strike](#)," *Arab News*, October 13, 2023.
- Resistance News Network (Telegram), PalestineResist, <https://t.me/PalestineResist/22064>, undated. Requires account to view.
- Palestinian Ministry of Culture. [*The Second Preliminary Report on the Cultural Sector Damage*](#), December 6, 2023, pg 34.
- Saber, Indlieb Farazi. "[A 'cultural genocide': Which of Gaza's heritage sites have been destroyed?](#)" *Al Jazeera*, January 14, 2024.

Al-Shorouq Al-Daem Library

Description of damage: Destroyed

Date of damage: Unknown, first reported December 6, 2023



Sources:

- Palestinian Ministry of Culture. [*The Second Preliminary Report on the Cultural Sector Damage*](#), December 6, 2023, pg 34.

University Libraries

Islamic University of Gaza Library (Gaza City)

Description of damage: Destroyed

Date of damage: October 9, 2023

Sources:

- Abu Sneineh, Mustafa. "[Operation Al-Aqsa Flood' Day 58](#)," Mondoweiss, December 3, 2023.
- Palestinian Ministry of Culture. [*The Second Preliminary Report on the Cultural Sector Damage*](#), December 6, 2023, pg 56.
- "[Israel Detonates Last University in Gaza](#)," *International Middle East Media Center*, January 18, 2024.

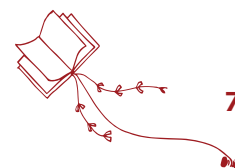
Al-Israa University Library and National Museum (near Gaza City)

Description of damage: Destroyed by controlled detonation by the Israeli military, including the library and National Museum which contained over 3,000 archeological artifacts. The museum was looted prior to destruction.

Date of damage: January 18, 2024.

Sources:

- "[Israeli Forces Destroy Main Buildings of Al-Israa University in Gaza](#)," *The Palestine Chronicle*, January 18, 2024.
- Conley, Julia. "[This Is Not Self-Defense... This Is Ethnic Cleansing': Israel Blows Up Gaza University](#)," *Common Dreams*, January 18, 2024.



- Pollock, Laura. “[Israel destroys last university in Gaza as strikes continue](#),” *The National*, January 18, 2024.
- “[Israel Detonates Last University in Gaza](#),” *International Middle East Media Center*, January 18, 2024.
- “[Journalist questions bombing of Gaza university](#),” *Al Jazeera*, January 19, 2024.

Al-Quds Open University Library (Gaza City)

Description of damage: Damaged

Date of damage: Unknown, first reported December 6, 2023

Sources:

- Palestinian Ministry of Culture. [The Second Preliminary Report on the Cultural Sector Damage](#), December 6, 2023, pg 56.

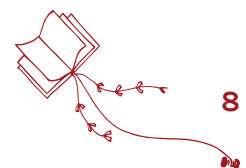
Jawaharlal Nehru Library, Al-Azhar University (Gaza City)

Description of damage: University campus was destroyed, though reports do not mention the library specifically.

Date of damage: October 19, 2023

Sources:

- O’Malley, Brendan and Wagdy Sawahel. “[Israel bombs Gaza university, alleging use by military](#),” *University World News*, October 12, 2023.
- “[Israeli air strikes target Gaza’s Al-Azhar University](#),” *Middle East Monitor*, November 6, 2023.
- Palestinian Ministry of Culture. [The Second Preliminary Report on the Cultural Sector Damage](#), December 6, 2023, pg 56.
- Fabian, Emanuel. “[IDF says it destroyed buildings containing Hamas infrastructure at Gaza City’s Al-Azhar University](#),” *The Times of Israel*, December 8, 2023.



Museums

Akkad Museum

Description of damage: Damaged. The museum includes about 2,800 artifacts from prehistoric to modern times.

Date of damage: Unknown, first reported November 28, 2023

Sources:

- Proctor, Rebecca Anne. "[How Israel's bombing campaign endangers Gaza's archaeological treasures](#)," *Arab News*, November 28, 2023.
- Palestinian Ministry of Culture. [The Second Preliminary Report on the Cultural Sector Damage](#), December 6, 2023, pg 49.

Cultural Kararah Museum

Description of damage: Severe damage, including the destruction of display cabinets containing archaeological artifacts.

Date of damage: Unknown, first reported December 6, 2023

Sources:

- Palestinian Ministry of Culture. [The Second Preliminary Report on the Cultural Sector Damage](#), December 6, 2023, pg 49.

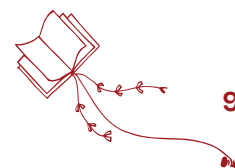
Deir Al-Balah Museum

Description of damage: Partial damage from indirect shelling.

Date of Damage: Unknown, first reported November 7, 2023

Sources:

- Al-Barsh, Ahmed. "[Report on the Impact of the Recent War in 2023 on the Cultural Heritage in Gaza Strip - Palestine](#)," *Heritage for Peace*, November 7, 2023.
- Veltman, Chloe. "[More than 100 Gaza heritage sites have been damaged or destroyed by Israeli attacks](#)," *NPR*, December 3, 2023.



Ibrahim Abu Sha'ar Heritage Diwan (Southeast of Rafah)

Description of damage: Destroyed, including an extensive collection of Bedouin heritage.

Date of damage: Unknown, first reported December 6, 2023

Sources:

- Palestinian Ministry of Culture. *The Second Preliminary Report on the Cultural Sector Damage*, December 6, 2023, pg 49.

Khudari Museum

Description of damage: Damaged

Date of damage: Unknown, first reported December 6, 2023

Sources:

- Palestinian Ministry of Culture. *The Second Preliminary Report on the Cultural Sector Damage*, December 6, 2023, pg 49.

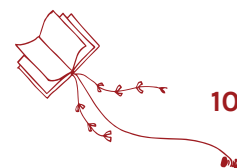
Al-Qarara Cultural Museum, also known as the Khan Younis Museum (Khan Younis)

Description of damage: Heavily damaged, including complete destruction of the pottery collection. Museum contains 3,500 archaeological and historical artifacts, dating back to as far as 4,000 BC.

Date of damage: October 2023

Sources:

- Resistance News Network (Telegram), PalestineResist, <https://t.me/PalestineResist/22064>, undated. Requires account to view.
- Proctor, Rebecca Anne. "[How Israel's bombing campaign endangers Gaza's archaeological treasures](#)," *Arab News*, November 28, 2023.
- Palestinian Ministry of Culture. *The Second Preliminary Report on the Cultural Sector Damage*, December 6, 2023, pg 49.
- Saber, Indlieb Farazi. "[A 'cultural genocide': Which of Gaza's heritage sites have been destroyed?](#)" *Al Jazeera*, January 14, 2024.



Rafah Museum (Rafah)

Description of damage: Complete destruction by airstrikes.

Date of damage: Early October 2023

Sources:

- Veltman, Chloe. “[More than 100 Gaza heritage sites have been damaged or destroyed by Israeli attacks,](#)” *NPR*, December 3, 2023.
- Palestinian Ministry of Culture. [The Second Preliminary Report on the Cultural Sector Damage](#), December 6, 2023, pg 49.
- Saber, Indlieb Farazi. “[A ‘cultural genocide’: Which of Gaza’s heritage sites have been destroyed?](#)” *Al Jazeera*, January 14, 2024.

Shahwan Museum

Description of damage: Damaged

Date of damage: Unknown, first reported December 6, 2023

Sources:

- Palestinian Ministry of Culture. [The Second Preliminary Report on the Cultural Sector Damage](#), December 6, 2023, pg 49.

Martyred Information Workers

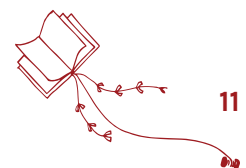
Abdul Karim Hashash

Writer and advocate for Palestinian heritage advocate, collector of Palestinian rare books.

Date of death: October 23, 2023, with many members of his family.

Sources:

- Palestinian Ministry of Culture. [The Second Preliminary Report on the Cultural Sector Damage](#), December 6, 2023, pg 14.



Bilal Jadallah

Director of the Press House

Date of death: November 19, 2023

Sources:

- Palestinian Ministry of Culture. [*The Second Preliminary Report on the Cultural Sector Damage*](#), December 6, 2023, pg 7.

Doaa Al-Masri

Librarian at the Edward Said Library

Date of death: December 7, 2023, with her parents and siblings.

Sources:

- Abu Toha, Mosab. [*Instagram post*](#), December 7, 2023.
- [*“MECA colleague and friend Doaa Al-Masri killed in Gaza,” Madison-Rafah Sister City Project*](#), December 10, 2023.

Dr. Jihad Suleiman Al-Masri

Historian and Director of Al-Quds Open University’s Khan Yunis Branch

Date of death: October 17, 2023

Sources:

- Palestinian Ministry of Culture. [*The Second Preliminary Report on the Cultural Sector Damage*](#), December 6, 2023, pg 15.

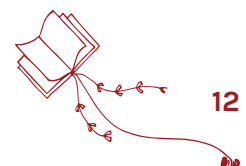
Iman Abu Saeed

Oral historian at the Tamer Institute for Community Education

Date of death: Unknown, with her children Joudi and Ziyad and her husband Eyad.

Sources:

- Palestinian Ministry of Culture. [*The Second Preliminary Report on the Cultural Sector Damage*](#), December 6, 2023, pg 27.



Marwan Tarazi

Archivist of Photo Kegham, Kegham Djeghalian's photography studio

Date of death: October 19, 2023, killed with his wife Nihad and infant granddaughter Alin while sheltering at the Saint Porphyrius Orthodox Church.

Sources:

- Botelho, Jessica A., "[Former Congressman says family members, including baby cousin, killed in Israeli airstrike in Gaza](#)," *ABC News 15*, October 24, 2023.
- "[Israel/OPT: 'Nowhere safe in Gaza': Unlawful Israeli strikes illustrate callous disregard for Palestinian lives](#)," *Amnesty International*, November 20, 2024.
- Palestinian Ministry of Culture. [The Second Preliminary Report on the Cultural Sector Damage](#), December 6, 2023, pg 10.
- Allam, Hannah. "[Songs of grief and defiance fuel Arab solidarity for Palestinians](#)," *The Washington Post*, December 27, 2023.