The United Nations has reported that nearly 70 percent of verified deaths in Gaza are women and children, with children alone accounting for 44 percent of the fatalities. The youngest victim, a one-day-old infant, and the oldest, a 97-year-old woman, highlight the toll on vulnerable populations amid the ongoing conflict.

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) published the report on Friday, having verified 8,119 of the more than 34,500 people reportedly killed during the first six months of Israel's war in Gaza, finding that a high proportion were women and children – the youngest just one day

Turk blasted Israel's "wanton disregard" for the "rules of war … designed to limit and prevent human suffering in times of armed conflict". He urged Israel to comply with its international obligations, noting its current siege of northern Gaza and its decision to sever ties with the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA).

The report warned that "widespread or systematic" attacks on civilians could amount to "crimes against humanity".

"And if committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, they may also constitute genocide," it said

The UN's breakdown of the victims' ages and genders backs the Palestinian assertion that women and children represent a large portion of those killed in the war.

A Palestinian woman who lost her leg when her family home was hit in an Israeli strike in the Jabalia refugee camp

A Palestinian woman who lost her leg when her family home was hit in an Israeli strike in the Jabalia refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip, is carried down a ladder on November 7, 2024 [AFP].

Overall, 44 percent of the victims were children, with the biggest single category aged five to nine, followed by those aged 10-14, and then those aged up to and including four.

It showed that in 88 percent of cases, five or more people were killed in the same attack, pointing to the Israeli military's use of weapons impacting wide areas in densely populated zones.

Some of the deaths may also have been the result of errant projectiles from Palestinian armed groups dropping short, the report added.

It also pointed to “the Israeli government’s continuing unlawful failures to allow, facilitate and ensure the entry of humanitarian aid, the destruction of civilian infrastructure, and repeated mass displacement”.

“This conduct by Israeli forces has caused unprecedented levels of killings, death, injury, starvation, illness and disease,” it continued.

Commenting on the findings on Friday, Israel’s diplomatic mission in Geneva said it “categorically rejects” the report and accused the UN of relying on “unverified information”.

Israel’s war on Gaza has killed at least 43,469 Palestinians and injured 102,561 since October 7, 2023, according to the enclave’s Ministry of Health. Turn this into news