



Time, waiting, and the politics of delay in Gaza during genocide

Guido Veronese^{1,2}  · Bilal Hamamra³ · Fayez Mahamid⁴

Received: 24 March 2026 / Accepted: 29 July 2026
© The Author(s) 2026

Abstract

This study examines how war reorganizes temporal experience through the politics of waiting, delay, and suspended life in the Gaza Strip, Palestine. Drawing on a qualitative, interpretive design grounded in decolonial feminist and critical temporal perspectives, the study explores how civilians living under conditions of continuous violence experience and make sense of time in their everyday lives. Semi-structured interviews were conducted between September 2024 and March 2025 with thirty displaced participants residing in internally displaced settings across Gaza during the ongoing genocidal campaign following October 2023. The findings reveal that time in Gaza is not experienced as linear or progressive, but as fragmented, suspended, and increasingly detached from future orientation. Six interrelated themes were identified: (1) time as suspended life, (2) waiting for death rather than rescue, (3) waiting as a mechanism of control and exhaustion, (4) time measured through loss, (5) the collapse of the future into an endless present, and (6) temporal fatigue and hopelessness associated with prolonged, unresolved waiting. Across these themes, waiting emerges not as a passive interval but as a structured and politically mediated condition that shapes emotional, psychological, and social life. The study argues that temporality itself operates as a dimension of power in contexts of protracted conflict, where the regulation of delay, uncertainty, and interruption contributes to the governance of civilian populations. By integrating insights from necropolitical theory, decolonial feminism, and critical psychology, the study re-frames waiting as a central modality of violence rather than a byproduct of crisis. The findings contribute to interdisciplinary debates on war, temporality, and mental health, highlighting the need for analytical frameworks that account for the lived experience of time under conditions of sustained structural violence.

Keywords Politics of time · Decolonial feminism · Siege and blockade · Lived experience · Continuous traumatic stress · Time perception · Gaza Strip



Introduction

War is not only a machinery of destruction in space; it is also a regime that reorganizes time (Gürkan, 2025). In Gaza, violence is lived not simply through bombardment, forced displacement, hunger, and bereavement, but through the enforced suspension of ordinary temporality itself (Dader 2025). Under conditions of siege and repeated military assault, daily life is no longer organized by routine, anticipation, or developmental continuity. Instead, time is fragmented into intervals of waiting, interruption, and survival (Quigley, 2026). This article argues that, in Gaza, waiting is not a neutral temporal gap between crisis and relief, but a political technology through which power is exercised over life, death, mobility, care, and futurity (Funez-Flores 2026). Waiting becomes a modality of domination: people wait for food that may not arrive, for evacuation that may never materialize, for news of loved ones, for the next attack, and, increasingly, for death rather than rescue. In this sense, temporal suspension is not ancillary to violence; it is one of its central forms (Chung 2026).

This argument emerges from, and contributes to, a broad body of global scholarship showing that war produces not only acute trauma but also enduring psychosocial, relational, and ecological devastation (Zafran et al. 2026). Across conflict settings, the mental health burden is consistently profound. A major WHO-backed meta-analysis estimated that more than one in five people in conflict-affected settings lives with a mental disorder at any given time, with substantial rates of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress symptoms (Charlson et al. 2019). Research on children affected by war similarly shows that armed conflict disrupts attachment, learning, bodily safety, emotional regulation, social trust, and future orientation, especially when violence is chronic, displacement is repeated, and the infrastructures of everyday life are systematically dismantled (Hazer and Gredebäck 2023). Yet critical scholarship has also warned that the dominant trauma paradigm, especially when organized around discrete past events and individualized symptom categories, can be too narrow for contexts in which danger is ongoing, structurally produced, and politically administered (Britt & Hammett, 2024; Eagle and Kaminer 2013).

The Middle East offers a stark illustration of this problem. Decades of war in Palestine, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Sudan, and Yemen have generated extensive evidence linking political violence to post-traumatic stress, depression, anxiety, complicated grief, family strain, disrupted education, and intergenerational distress (Khalil et al. 2024). At the same time, studies from the region repeatedly show that psychological suffering cannot be reduced to isolated “traumatic events,” because the relevant context is one of continuing military threat, siege, displacement, economic erosion, and institutional collapse (Abdallah et al., 2006). In Gaza specifically, severe psychological distress long predated the current phase of destruction; for example, a 2020 study documented high levels of traumatic exposure and PTSD among Palestinian children, while more recent Lancet commentaries have described an acute escalation of mental health need since October 2023. UNICEF (2024) has further warned that virtually all children in Gaza require mental health and psychosocial support (Abudayya et al. 2023; Jamei and Barbui 2024; Taha et al. 2024). The case of Gaza therefore demands a framework capable of grasping both spectacular and attritional



violence, both immediate mass death and the slower destruction of social, bodily, and temporal conditions necessary for life.

For that reason, this article adopts a decolonial feminist stance rather than a merely humanitarian or clinical one. A decolonial approach is essential because Gaza cannot be analytically severed from the longer histories of settler colonialism, occupation, blockade, racialized dispossession, and gendered governance that structure Palestinian life. Drawing on decolonial feminist scholarship, the analysis situates temporal disruption within broader histories of settler colonialism, occupation, blockade, and gendered governance (Lugones 2007). Feminist geopolitics extends this insight by refusing the division between “large-scale” war and “small-scale” everyday life, showing instead how power is reproduced through intimate, embodied, domestic, and temporal forms of violence (Hydman, 2019). Such a stance is particularly important in Gaza, where the destruction of homes, kinship networks, maternal care, schooling, bodily safety, and the possibility of planning for tomorrow is inseparable from military force itself. A feminist reading therefore does not add gender as a secondary variable; it shows that war is lived through reproductive labor, caregiving burdens, embodied fear, the management of children’s terror, and the differential exposure of women, children, disabled people, and the elderly to abandonment and exhaustion (Golańska 2023).

This decolonial feminist framework converges powerfully with necropolitical theory. Mbembe’s formulation of necropolitics remains foundational because it identifies sovereignty with the power to dictate who may live and who must die, and to produce spaces in which populations are relegated to conditions of death-in-life (Mbembe 2003). Gaza has often been read through this lens because it exemplifies how siege, enclosure, bombardment, infrastructural destruction, and managed deprivation transform civilian existence into a condition of permanent exposure. Subsequent work has extended this perspective by demonstrating how contemporary forms of power operate not only through killing but also through debilitation, attrition, and the management of prolonged exposure to harm (Berlant 2007; Puar 2015). Read together, these perspectives allow us to see waiting in Gaza not as passivity, but as an imposed temporal condition through which necropower is distributed: life is neither fully preserved nor immediately extinguished, but held in an exhausted threshold between survival and destruction (Hanbali et al. 2024).

Critical Palestinian scholarship deepens this account by insisting that colonial violence is also epistemic, affective, and generational (Shaloub-Kevorkian, 2025). Shalhoub-Kevorkian’s work on “unchilding” is particularly important because it shows how Palestinian children are expelled from the protected category of childhood and rendered governable through racialized logics of suspicion, disposability, and exposure to violence (Shaloub-Kevorkian, 2020). Work on Palestinian temporality and waiting further demonstrates that closure, blockade, and delayed mobility are not incidental bureaucratic inconveniences, but constitutive techniques of colonial rule (Peteet 2018; Singh 2019; Wick, 2011). Scholarship on anticipation further demonstrates that uncertain futures are often lived in advance through affective and embodied practices of expectation, vigilance, and preparation (Bryant 2016). Anticipation therefore becomes central to understanding waiting under conditions of ongoing violence, where future threats are experienced in the present before they materialize.



In this sense, the politics of delay in Gaza is not merely humanitarian failure. It is a mode of governance that exhausts bodies, thins hope, and erodes futurity while appearing administratively neutral.

Psychological theory can illuminate these processes, but only if it moves beyond decontextualized models of trauma. The concept of continuous traumatic stress is especially apt because it was developed precisely to capture experiences of living under realistic, ongoing danger rather than after a bounded event (Eagle and Kaminer 2013). Continuous traumatic stress helps explain why fear in Gaza is not retrospective but anticipatory, why waiting itself becomes pathogenic, and why hypervigilance is an adaptation to actual threat rather than simply a symptom. Ecological and social-ecological models are also relevant because they show that war harms mental health both directly, through violence and bereavement, and indirectly, through the destruction of housing, education, care systems, social networks, and daily routines (Dubow et al. 2025; Miller and Rasmussen 2024). Conservation of Resources theory adds another layer by clarifying how distress intensifies when people undergo cascading losses of shelter, safety, family cohesion, livelihood, medicine, mobility, and symbolic resources such as dignity and hope (Hollifield et al., 2016; Munoz et al., 2024). A liberation-oriented perspective further cautions against reducing distress to individual pathology, emphasizing instead the political and structural conditions through which suffering is produced (Marshall & Sousa, 2017).

While the temporal dynamics described here are rooted in longer histories of occupation, siege, blockade, and recurrent military violence, the present study is empirically situated within the genocidal campaign that followed October 2023. Participants occasionally drew connections between current experiences and earlier periods of collective suffering, yet the analysis focuses specifically on how the unprecedented scale of destruction, displacement, deprivation, and uncertainty since October 2023 has reshaped lived experiences of waiting, anticipation, and futurity. This focus allows us to examine how temporal disruption operates within an acute phase of mass violence while remaining attentive to the historical conditions that made such experiences intelligible.

Taken together, scholarship on temporality, waiting, anticipation, and continuous exposure to violence suggests that time itself becomes a critical terrain through which power is exercised and experienced. In Gaza, waiting is not simply an interval between events but a socially and politically organized condition that shapes how people relate to danger, survival, memory, and the future. Waiting is not outside violence; it is one of the ways violence is made to last. Through bombardment, siege, bureaucratic obstruction, repeated displacement, and the continuous withholding of safety, care, and certainty, war reorganizes temporal experience into suspended life, anticipatory grief, exhausted endurance, and the foreclosure of the future. To study waiting in Gaza, then, is not to move away from war toward a softer psychosocial register. It is to examine how contemporary colonial warfare governs populations not only by killing them, but by holding them in protracted states of injury, depletion, and temporal captivity. Such an approach makes visible the psychic life of necropolitics and the temporal architecture of genocide (Bargu, 2016; Segal, 2025).



The study

This article aims to advance a theoretically grounded and empirically sensitive understanding of how war in Gaza operates through the reconfiguration of temporality as a central modality of power (Ziadah et al. 2026). Specifically, it conceptualizes *waiting* not as an incidental byproduct of crisis but as a structured condition produced through siege, displacement, infrastructural destruction, and the systematic withholding of mobility, care, and security (Farhat et al. 2023). By foregrounding time as an analytic category, the article seeks to extend dominant war and trauma frameworks that have traditionally prioritized spatial destruction and discrete events, demonstrating instead how protracted violence is lived through interruption, anticipation, delay, and the erosion of futurity.

The empirical analysis focuses specifically on experiences emerging during the genocidal campaign following October 2023. Although participants occasionally referenced earlier experiences of siege, blockade, and military violence, the analysis centers on the intensified temporal disruptions associated with the current phase of mass displacement, destruction, and civilian suffering.

The study's aim is empirical and interpretive: to document and analyze how individuals and families in Gaza experience and narrate waiting under conditions of continuous threat. Here, waiting is approached as a lived, embodied, and relational phenomenon—one that reorganizes caregiving practices, disrupts intergenerational continuity, reshapes emotional regulation, and transforms the meaning of survival. The article pays particular attention to how time is experienced through cycles of anticipation (of violence, loss, or displacement), enforced immobility, and the repetitive collapse of expected futures. In doing so, it contributes to emerging scholarship on chronic and continuous exposure to violence, including work on continuous traumatic stress, by situating psychological processes within their political and material conditions (Stevens et al. 2013).

The article also seeks to bridge psychological and critical social theory by situating distress within broader ecologies of structural violence, loss, and constraint (Jackson and Sadler 2022).

It engages with ecological and resource-based frameworks to account for cumulative loss and depletion, while also drawing on liberation-oriented approaches that foreground agency, resistance, and meaning-making under extreme constraint.

In terms of scope, the article is anchored in the context of Gaza as a paradigmatic site of protracted, high-intensity, and structurally organized violence (Shaw 2025). However, its analytical contributions are intended to resonate beyond this specific case. By theorizing waiting as a modality of governance and harm, the article speaks to other contexts of siege, occupation, forced encampment, and chronic militarization across the Middle East and globally. It therefore contributes to interdisciplinary debates in critical psychology, global mental health, war and conflict studies, feminist geopolitics, and decolonial theory.

Finally, the article seeks to make both theoretical and ethical interventions. Theoretically, it repositions time—rather than only space or event—as a central dimension through which war is enacted and endured (McIntosh, 2021). Ethically, it resists representations of affected populations as passive victims of crisis, instead attending



to the complex ways in which people endure, interpret, and navigate conditions of imposed waiting. In doing so, it calls for a reorientation of research and intervention frameworks that can account for the lived realities of populations whose lives are governed not only by violence itself, but by the prolonged and uncertain time in which that violence unfolds.

Methods

Participants and sampling

This study was conducted with 30 Palestinian adults living in conditions of internal displacement in the Gaza Strip during ongoing genocidal violence. The sample was generated through purposive, context-responsive recruitment aimed at identifying participants able to speak directly to the study's central concern: the lived experience of time, waiting, delay, and suspended futurity under continuous war. Consistent with an interpretive qualitative design, the goal was not demographic representativeness but the inclusion of information-rich participants whose daily lives had been profoundly reorganized by bombardment, repeated displacement, siege conditions, and the breakdown of ordinary temporal structures. Participants included women and men between 18 and 60 years of age who were residing in shelters, temporary accommodations, or other internally displaced settings at the time of data collection.

Selection criteria were developed to ensure strong conceptual alignment between the sample and the study's theoretical framework. Participants were eligible if they were civilians currently displaced within Gaza; had direct and ongoing exposure to war-related disruption, including repeated evacuation, loss of housing, family separation, uncertainty regarding safety, or prolonged deprivation of basic necessities; and were able to engage in reflective narration about how time was being lived, endured, and interpreted in everyday life. The study did not seek participants merely on the basis of trauma exposure in a narrow clinical sense. Rather, it sought people whose lives had been reorganized by waiting, interruption, uncertainty, and temporal exhaustion, since these experiences were central to the paper's decolonial and necropolitical conceptualization of time as a modality of domination. Individuals were not recruited if participation would have posed immediate risk to their psychological stability or physical safety, or if the conditions of displacement made meaningful consent and sustained conversation impossible. This approach strengthened the analytic fit between the sample and the inquiry by ensuring that participants were selected not only for exposure to violence, but for their situated capacity to articulate its temporal consequences.

Recruitment proceeded through trusted local contacts and referral-based community networks. In the present context, this strategy was both practical and epistemologically appropriate. Under siege, infrastructure collapse, and severe mobility restrictions, conventional recruitment procedures were neither realistic nor ethically preferable. At the same time, the use of relational access was consistent with a decolonial research stance that privileges trust, contextual embeddedness, and non-extractive engagement over impersonal sampling logics. The resulting sample was



sufficiently diverse to capture variation in age, gender, family responsibilities, and forms of displacement, while remaining coherent in relation to the study's specific focus on temporal experience under continuous violence.

Data collection

Data were generated through in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted with displaced civilians across different settings in Gaza. Interviews were carried out either in person or remotely, depending on security conditions, access, communication infrastructure, and participants' immediate circumstances. All interviews were conducted in Arabic by a Palestinian research assistant trained in clinical psychology. Her linguistic fluency, social proximity, and contextual knowledge were essential for building rapport and for recognizing the affective, cultural, and political nuances embedded in participants' accounts. At the same time, this proximity was treated reflexively, not romantically, as part of the interpretive conditions through which data were produced.

The interviews followed an open-ended guide designed to elicit participants' lived understandings of time under war rather than simply document events. Questions invited reflection on disrupted routines, prolonged waiting, anticipation of violence, uncertainty around food and aid, altered relations to the future, and the everyday experience of temporal suspension. Participants were encouraged to describe how time felt in their bodies, relationships, and decision-making, and how repeated delay shaped their emotional and social worlds. This format was chosen to preserve participants' interpretive agency while still allowing sustained engagement with the study's conceptual concerns. Interviews lasted approximately 60 to 90 min, were audio-recorded where feasible, and were transcribed verbatim in Arabic. The research process was guided by an ethic of minimal intrusion: participants could pause, decline to answer, or end the conversation at any time.

Interviews were transcribed verbatim in Arabic by the Palestinian research assistant who conducted the interviews. The transcripts were subsequently translated into English for collaborative analysis. Translation was treated as an interpretive rather than purely technical process, with regular discussions among the research team to preserve culturally specific meanings, metaphors, and expressions.

Data analysis

The material was analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis as developed by Braun and Clarke (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Braun et al. 2023). This analytic approach was selected because it is well suited to research that is interpretive, theoretically informed, and concerned with socially patterned meanings rather than with coding reliability or consensus-based categorization. In this study, themes were not treated as objective entities waiting to be discovered inside the data. They were understood as analytic constructions developed through sustained engagement between the researchers, the participants' narratives, and the critical theoretical framework informing the project. Reflexive thematic analysis was therefore methodologically consistent with the



article's decolonial feminist and critical temporal orientation, which treats experience as socially produced, politically structured, and interpretively mediated.

Analysis began with prolonged immersion in the Arabic transcripts. Each transcript was read repeatedly to develop familiarity not only with semantic content but also with tone, recurrence, hesitation, metaphor, and affective intensity. Attention was directed to how participants described waiting, delay, interruption, suspended life, anticipatory fear, and the collapse of future orientation. At this stage, the analytic task was not to sort responses into predefined categories, but to enter the temporal logic of participants' accounts and to notice how everyday life was narrated through disrupted rhythms, stretched duration, repetitive uncertainty, and the feeling of time becoming unlivable.

The second phase involved detailed coding of the transcripts in Arabic. Coding was primarily inductive in the sense that it stayed close to participants' language and did not begin with a fixed template. At the same time, it was not empiricist or theory-free. The coding process was sensitized by the paper's broader critical framework, including concerns with necropolitics, temporal domination, colonial governance, and continuous traumatic stress. Segments of text were coded for the ways participants described suspended routines, waiting as control, bodily fatigue, anticipatory terror, temporal disorientation, memory organized around rupture, and the foreclosure of futurity. Codes were written to preserve experiential texture rather than reduce accounts to abstract labels too early in the process.

In the third phase, codes were brought into relation with one another and clustered into broader patterns of shared meaning. This involved asking how seemingly different excerpts converged around a common temporal structure or political function. For example, narratives about waiting for aid, waiting for evacuation, and waiting for death were initially coded separately, but later examined together as different manifestations of waiting as a politically imposed condition. Likewise, excerpts concerning the loss of routine, inability to plan, and the sense of living in one endless day were brought together around the broader problem of suspended life and erased futurity. This stage was iterative and recursive rather than linear, requiring repeated movement between coded data, full transcripts, and emerging thematic maps.

In the fourth phase, candidate themes were reviewed and refined in relation to the whole dataset and the study's analytic aims. The purpose here was not simply to reduce the number of codes, but to ensure that each theme captured a meaningful and distinctive dimension of participants' temporal experience while remaining grounded in the data. Themes were revised when they were too broad, too descriptive, or insufficiently responsive to the political and affective complexity of the material. Contradictory or ambivalent passages were not treated as noise; they were used to deepen interpretation and to avoid flattening experience into overly coherent narratives.

In the final phase, themes were defined and named through sustained writing and re-reading. This stage involved clarifying what each theme explained about the organization of time under genocidal violence and how it related to the article's broader argument that temporality itself becomes a medium of harm and control. Analytic rigor was pursued through depth of engagement, conceptual transparency, recursive movement between data and interpretation, and continuous reflexive attention to how the researchers' own locations shaped the reading of the material.



The coding process was led by the Palestinian research assistant and subsequently discussed with the wider research team. Emerging codes, thematic structures, and interpretations were reviewed collaboratively through iterative meetings. Differences in interpretation were not treated as problems requiring consensus but as opportunities to deepen reflexive engagement with the data and examine how disciplinary, cultural, and political locations shaped interpretation.

Positionality statement

This study is shaped by a research collaboration marked by unequal but productive locations within global knowledge production. Guido Veronese is an associate professor of clinical and community psychology at the University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy and a clinical psychologist and systemic psychotherapist trained within European psychological traditions. His institutional profile situates him within Western academic psychology even as much of his work has critically engaged war, colonial violence, and the limits of individualizing trauma frameworks. Fayeze Mahamid is a Palestinian scholar of counseling and clinical psychology who lectures in the An-Najah National University, Palestine (Nablus) University and has held leadership roles there, including heading the Psychology and Counseling Department and the graduate department for human sciences; his work focuses on mental health, trauma intervention, and psychosocial rehabilitation in Palestine. Bilal Hamamra's (An-Najah National University, Nablus) scholarship spans Palestinian studies, gender, and literary-cultural analysis.

These locations matter analytically and ethically. The paper does not claim neutrality. Rather, it understands knowledge as produced through situated relations of power, language, mobility, and institutional visibility. The collaboration joins a scholar located in a European university with Palestinian scholars working within and through institutions directly shaped by occupation, siege, and the afterlives of colonial governance. A critical decolonial stance therefore requires attention to asymmetries in authorship, circulation, and recognizability, including the risk that Palestinian experience becomes academically legible only when mediated through institutions and frameworks external to it. At the same time, the study resists the assumption that proximity guarantees epistemic purity or that distance necessarily entails distortion. Instead, reflexivity was treated as a collective practice of interrogating how interpretation was being shaped by disciplinary training, institutional location, linguistic mediation, and political commitment.

Reflexivity was enacted throughout analysis through ongoing dialogue regarding interpretation, emphasis, and representation. Team members occasionally differed in how particular narratives should be understood, especially concerning the relationship between psychological suffering and political violence. Rather than seeking premature agreement, these tensions were used as analytic resources that enabled closer attention to participants' meanings and to the assumptions informing our readings. The aim was not to erase these asymmetries, but to render them visible and accountable while producing an analysis that remains answerable to Palestinian lived realities rather than detached methodological formalism.



Results

The thematic content analysis of the interview transcripts resulted in the identification of six major themes, which structure the findings as follows: (1) *Time as Suspended Life*; (2) *Waiting for Death, Not Rescue*; (3) *Waiting as a Tool of Control and Exhaustion*; (4) *Time Measured Through Loss*; (5) *The Endless Present and the Erasure of the Future*; and (6) *Waiting Without End: Temporal Fatigue and Hopelessness*. These themes collectively illustrate how temporality in Gaza is experienced as fragmented, constrained, and politically shaped. Participants' narratives show that waiting is not merely a passive interval but a defining condition of everyday life under continuous violence. Time is reorganized around survival, anticipation, and loss, rather than routine or progression. Across accounts, participants described how prolonged waiting, repeated disruption, and uncertainty reshape emotional regulation, limit agency, and erode future orientation. The findings highlight that temporal experience itself becomes a central dimension of suffering, where life is lived in a suspended present marked by exhaustion, unpredictability, and the absence of stable temporal continuity.

First theme: Time as suspended life

In Gaza, time is no longer experienced as a forward-moving sequence but as a suspended state in which life is placed on hold. Survivors repeatedly describe days that blur into one another, stripped of structure, routine, or expectation. Ordinary temporal markers—morning, evening, weekdays, plans—lose meaning as survival becomes the sole reference point. Alya (21, student) described this disintegration of time, saying, *"I wake up and I don't know what day it is anymore. Time feels frozen, like we are stuck inside one long moment that refuses to move forward."* Her words convey how suspension replaces progression, leaving life trapped in an extended present. Similarly, Samira (43, displaced woman) reflected on how waiting dominates daily existence, noting, *"We don't live days anymore; we endure hours. Everything is about getting through the next moment without being killed."* The reduction of life to hours reveals how time is compressed by danger, emptied of continuity. Sawsan (30, displaced woman) added *"The days feel identical now. I keep thinking maybe time is moving, but nothing changes around us. It feels like we are stuck inside the same moment repeating itself."* This narrative reflects the experience of temporal repetition, where the absence of visible change creates a sense of stalled time. It reinforces the idea that everyday life is no longer experienced as sequential but as an unchanging loop of survival.

Another civilian, Omar (35, adult civilian) articulated this loss of temporal flow, stating, *"There is no future in our thinking now. Time stopped when the bombing started, and we have been standing still ever since."* This sense of paralysis exposes how violence interrupts not only movement in space but movement through time itself.

The suspension of time also reshapes emotional and psychological experience, producing a state of constant anticipation without resolution. Survivors describe living inside a pause that never ends, where waiting replaces living and progress is



indefinitely deferred. Yousef (49, father) explained this condition vividly, saying, *“Every day feels like waiting in a line that never moves. You stand there, exhausted, not knowing if the next step is life or death.”* His metaphor of a motionless line captures the frustration and uncertainty embedded in suspended time. Leila (26, young woman) echoed this experience, stating, *“I feel like my life has been paused by someone else, and I’m not allowed to press play again.”* The loss of control over time deepens feelings of helplessness, reinforcing domination through delay. Khaled (53, displaced civilian) reflected on the toll of this suspension, noting, *“When time stops, you start to disappear inside yourself. You are alive, but your life is no longer happening.”* Through these testimonies, suspended time emerges as a form of harm in itself, confining Gazans to a temporal limbo where existence is reduced to waiting without movement. Time, stripped of direction and agency, becomes another mechanism through which violence governs everyday life.

Second theme: Waiting for death, not rescue

In Gaza, waiting is not oriented toward relief or rescue but toward the anticipation of death. Survivors describe a form of waiting saturated with fear, where time stretches painfully as people listen, calculate, and brace themselves for the next strike. Nights become especially heavy, charged with expectation rather than rest. Amina (24, student) described this state of anticipatory terror, saying, *“Every night we wait for the sound that tells us it’s over. We don’t sleep deeply because sleep feels like letting our guard down in front of death.”* Her words reveal how waiting replaces rest, turning the night into a prolonged vigil. Dalia (38, displaced woman) explained how time slows under fear, noting, *“The minutes before a strike feel endless. You sit there, counting seconds, knowing that nothing you do can stop what is coming.”* Waiting here becomes an embodied experience, marked by tension and helplessness. Kareem (45, civilian) articulated the same condition starkly, stating, *“We wait without hope now. There is no rescue in our waiting, only the question of whose turn it will be.”* This framing strips waiting of optimism, transforming it into a countdown to loss.

This form of waiting also reshapes how people understand survival itself. Life becomes defined not by action or choice but by endurance in the face of impending harm. Survivors speak of existing in a state of constant readiness, where time is measured by threat rather than opportunity. Omar (50, father) described this vigilance, saying, *“We live with our bodies prepared to run or die at any moment. Waiting is exhausting because it never ends with safety.”* His words capture how anticipation drains energy even in the absence of immediate violence. Maya (26, young woman) echoed this exhaustion, stating, *“The waiting is worse than the bombing sometimes. At least when it happens, the fear has an end.”* Her comparison reveals how prolonged anticipation can inflict deeper psychological harm than sudden attack. Yassin (52, displaced civilian) reflected on the emotional toll of this temporal condition, noting, *“Waiting for death steals your ability to feel anything else. Your life shrinks until there is only fear and time passing slowly.”* Through these testimonies, waiting emerges as a weaponized experience, where the absence of rescue transforms time itself into a source of terror. Rather than offering the promise of survival, waiting becomes a space where death is continually rehearsed in the imagination.



Third theme: Waiting as a tool of control and exhaustion

Waiting in Gaza is not experienced as accidental or temporary but as a deliberate condition imposed on daily life. Survivors repeatedly describe how essential needs—food, water, medicine, evacuation—are made available only after prolonged delay, producing exhaustion and submission. Time itself becomes a mechanism of power, exercised through postponement rather than action. Samah (33, displaced woman) described this enforced waiting, saying, *“We line up for hours for food, not knowing if it will arrive. By the time it does, our bodies are already drained, and sometimes there is nothing left.”* Her account reveals how delay weakens both body and morale before aid even appears. Similarly, Bilal (23, student) reflected on waiting for evacuation, noting, *“They tell us to wait, then wait again. Days pass, and nothing changes. Waiting becomes another way of keeping us trapped.”* Here, postponement functions as containment, limiting movement and choice. Omar (45, civilian) expressed *“Even small things like water or movement depend on waiting. Everything is delayed, and that delay controls how we live more than anything else.”* This statement highlights how waiting extends beyond specific services to structure everyday life itself. It illustrates how delay operates as a form of control, shaping basic actions and reinforcing dependency through prolonged uncertainty. Another civilian, Adel (44, civilian), articulated this dynamic starkly, stating, *“We are not told no; we are told later. That ‘later’ never comes, and it breaks us slowly.”* The absence of refusal masks domination, making delay more psychologically corrosive than denial.

Prolonged waiting also produces a deep form of fatigue that extends beyond physical tiredness into emotional depletion. Survivors describe how continuous postponement erodes hope, initiative, and the will to act. Nidal (57, father) explained this exhaustion, saying, *“Waiting all day for help that may not come leaves you empty. By night, you have no strength left to hope or plan.”* His words reveal how delay dismantles future-oriented thinking. Similarly, Lina (29, young woman) described the cumulative toll, stating, *“Each day of waiting takes something from me. I feel myself becoming slower, quieter, less able to care.”* Waiting here becomes a process of erosion, gradually stripping individuals of vitality. Another displaced civilian, Firas (46, displaced civilian), reflected on how delay shapes obedience, noting, *“When you wait long enough, you stop asking questions. You just accept whatever happens.”* This resignation illustrates how waiting operates as a disciplinary force, conditioning people to endure rather than resist. Through these testimonies, waiting emerges as a political instrument, exhausting bodies and minds until survival itself becomes passive. Time, stretched through deliberate delay, becomes a subtle yet powerful form of control.

Fourth theme: Time measured through loss

As ordinary temporal markers collapse, time in Gaza becomes measured through loss rather than dates or routines. Survivors no longer recall days by calendar time but by the scale of destruction, the names of the dead, and the moments of displacement that fracture their lives. Time is reorganized around catastrophe, turning memory into a sequence of losses rather than events. Huda (37, mother) described this transformation, saying, *“I don’t remember days by numbers anymore. I remember the day my*



neighbor was killed, the day our house was destroyed, the day we fled again." Her words illustrate how personal history is reordered around moments of rupture. Similarly, Yousef (28, student) explained how time is counted through absence, noting, *"Each week is marked by who is no longer here. Time passes, but it only adds more names to the list of people we have lost."* The accumulation of names replaces chronological continuity, transforming time into a ledger of death. Another civilian, Ziad (51, civilian), articulated this shift starkly, stating, *"Our lives are divided into before and after each strike. There is no normal time left in between."* This binary structure reveals how violence fragments time into isolated segments of survival and loss.

Measuring time through loss also reshapes emotional attachment to memory, burdening recollection with grief and repetition. Survivors describe how remembering becomes painful yet unavoidable, as each loss anchors time more deeply in sorrow. Salman (57, displaced father) reflected on this weight, saying, *"Every memory now carries a wound. When I think of the past, I count what was taken, not what we lived."* His statement shows how memory is overtaken by subtraction rather than continuity. Samar (25, young woman) described how loss dominates temporal awareness, stating, *"Time feels heavier with every death. The more we lose, the longer each day becomes."* Here, time is experienced not as neutral duration but as an expanding burden shaped by grief. Another civilian, Imad (49, displaced civilian), explained the exhaustion this creates, noting, *"Remembering has become a form of pain. Time does not heal here; it only keeps reminding us of what is gone."* Through these accounts, time emerges as a container for loss, where passing days deepen rather than ease suffering. Instead of enabling recovery, time becomes another space in which violence continues to operate, endlessly rehearsing absence and grief.

Fifth theme: The endless present and the erasure of the future

As waiting becomes prolonged and loss accumulates, Gazans describe a temporal condition in which the future ceases to exist. Time collapses into an endless present dominated by survival, where imagining tomorrow feels impossible or even dangerous. Survivors repeatedly express how planning, dreaming, or anticipating life beyond the next hour has been suspended. Yara (21, student) articulated this erasure of futurity, saying, *"I stopped thinking about next week or next year. Thinking that far ahead feels unrealistic, almost foolish, when we might not survive the night."* Her words reveal how violence compresses time into an immediate horizon of threat. Similarly, Nadia (32, displaced woman) described how the future disappears from daily thought, noting, *"Before, I planned everything. Now, my plans end with today. Anything beyond that feels empty."* The absence of forward-looking imagination reflects how genocide arrests temporal continuity. Hassan (47, civilian) captured this condition starkly, stating, *"There is no future here to imagine. We live inside today, and today is already too much."* This declaration frames the present as overwhelming, leaving no psychological space for what comes next. Maha (36, mother) reported *"I don't even allow myself to imagine the future anymore. It feels unsafe to think beyond today because everything can change in seconds."* This narrative demonstrates the psychological withdrawal from future-oriented thinking. It shows how unpredictability transforms imagining the future into a source of anxiety, reinforcing



the dominance of the present moment. The erasure of the future also reshapes identity and meaning, as individuals lose the temporal frameworks that once structured their lives. Education, careers, family aspirations, and personal growth are all suspended, leaving people trapped in survival mode. Tariq (26, young man) described this rupture, saying, *"I used to think about my studies and my work. Now, I don't know if any of that will ever matter again."* His words reflect how aspirations dissolve when continuity is broken. Fatima (45, mother of three) caring for her children expressed a similar grief, stating, *"I cannot promise my children anything anymore. I don't know what tomorrow looks like, so I can only tell them to stay alive today."* The loss of promise transforms parental care into immediate protection rather than future preparation. Walid (53, displaced civilian) reflected on the emotional toll of this condition, noting, *"When the future disappears, you feel yourself shrinking. Life becomes smaller, tighter, and harder to carry."* Through these testimonies, the endless present emerges as a form of temporal imprisonment, where existence is reduced to endurance and the possibility of a future is systematically erased.

Sixth theme: Waiting without end—temporal fatigue and hopelessness

As waiting stretches without resolution, time in Gaza becomes a source of profound exhaustion rather than anticipation. Survivors describe a state of temporal fatigue in which the body and mind are worn down not by a single event, but by the endless continuation of uncertainty. Waiting ceases to be an interval between moments and instead becomes the dominant condition of life itself. Salwa (39, displaced woman) described this fatigue vividly, saying, *"I am not tired because of what happened, but because nothing ends. We wait, and wait again, until waiting itself feels heavier than the bombing."* Her words capture how duration, rather than intensity, produces collapse. Similarly, Reem (22, student) reflected on the draining nature of prolonged anticipation, noting, *"Each day of waiting empties me a little more. I feel exhausted before anything even happens."* This sense of depletion reveals how waiting erodes strength in advance, leaving individuals emotionally depleted. Nasser (50, civilian) articulated the same hopelessness, stating, *"Waiting has stolen my energy. I wake up tired because I know the day will be the same as yesterday."* Repetition here becomes a form of harm, turning time into a closed loop rather than a path forward.

This unending waiting also generates hopelessness, as the absence of resolution undermines belief in change or relief. Survivors speak of losing not only hope for rescue but faith in time itself as a source of healing. Khalil (57, father) expressed this despair, saying, *"At first, we believed waiting meant something would come. Now, waiting feels like proof that nothing will."* His words reveal a shift from expectation to resignation. Dina (26, young woman) echoed this sentiment, stating, *"I no longer count days because counting only reminds me that nothing improves."* The rejection of counting reflects a withdrawal from time as a meaningful measure. Jamal (48, displaced civilian) described how hopelessness settles into the body, noting, *"When waiting has no end, you stop imagining an end at all. You just exist, carrying time like a burden."* Through these testimonies, waiting without end emerges as a form of slow violence, draining vitality, hope, and agency. Time itself becomes an instrument of harm, not through sudden devastation but through relentless, unresolved endurance.



Discussion

Across the narratives, time emerges not as a neutral backdrop to violence but as a medium through which violence is organized, distributed, and endured. The suspension of temporal flow, repeatedly described as being “stuck” inside an unmoving present, reflects a condition in which life is neither fully extinguished nor allowed to unfold (Jones 2023). Individuals remain biologically alive while their capacity to inhabit time as progression, continuity, or becoming is systematically interrupted. This condition reveals a form of power that operates not only through destruction, but through the regulation of existence in a prolonged state of incompleteness (Farhat et al. 2023). This condition resonates with necropolitical accounts of power in which populations are maintained within spaces of prolonged exposure, neither fully abandoned to death nor allowed the conditions necessary for flourishing (Dader 2025; Mbembe 2003; Zaydah 2025).

Within this suspended temporality, anticipation becomes central. Consistent with Bryant’s (2016) work on anticipation, participants’ narratives suggest that uncertain futures are not merely awaited but actively inhabited in the present. However, anticipation is no longer oriented toward relief or transformation; instead, it is structured around the expectation of harm (Phipps 2022). Waiting is saturated with fear, where the future is not a space of possibility but a horizon of threat. The body adapts to this condition through continuous vigilance, preparing for impact even in moments of apparent stillness (Saleem et al. 2026). This produces a psychological state in which danger is not remembered as past but inhabited as imminent (Zedan 2025). The accounts illustrate how temporality itself becomes affectively charged: seconds stretch under fear, nights become elongated spaces of alertness, and the absence of immediate violence does not translate into safety but into prolonged exposure to its anticipation (Hamamra et al. 2025). In this sense, time is reorganized into a cycle of deferred catastrophe, where the future is continually rehearsed as loss.

At the same time, waiting operates as a mechanism of regulation and exhaustion (Munn 2025). The repeated deferral of basic necessities—food, safety, mobility, care—demonstrates how delay can function as a mode of governance (Faris et al., 2025). Rather than relying solely on direct prohibition or immediate force, control is exercised through postponement, uncertainty, and conditional access (Elkahout 2025). The absence of definitive refusal masks domination, while prolonged waiting gradually erodes physical strength, emotional resilience, and cognitive capacity for decision-making. Over time, this produces a form of compliance grounded not in agreement, but in depletion (Faris et al. 2025a). Individuals describe becoming slower, quieter, less responsive—not as a choice, but as the cumulative effect of being held in conditions where action is continually deferred. Time, stretched and manipulated, becomes a disciplinary force that reorganizes behavior through fatigue (Faris et al. 2025b).

This temporal restructuring also reshapes how life is remembered and narrated. As chronological markers collapse, time is reconstituted through moments of rupture—death, destruction, displacement—rather than through ordinary sequences of living (Diamant and Kalfon Hakhmigari 2025; Grisham et al. 2023). Memory becomes anchored in loss, transforming personal and collective histories into accumulations of



absence (Muhammad et al. 2023). The past is no longer a reservoir of continuity but a landscape of subtraction, where each recollection is tied to what has been taken. This reorganization of memory intensifies emotional burden, as time does not distance individuals from suffering but repeatedly returns them to it. Rather than facilitating healing, duration deepens the imprint of violence, embedding grief within the very structure of temporal experience (Jovanović and Bermúdez 2025).

The cumulative effect of these processes is the erosion of futurity (Bouchard 2025). As waiting extends indefinitely and loss accumulates, the capacity to imagine or plan for the future becomes increasingly untenable. The future is not simply uncertain; it is actively foreclosed. Individuals withdraw from forward-looking thought, not due to lack of aspiration, but because the conditions necessary for imagining continuity—safety, stability, predictability—are systematically dismantled. Life contracts into an immediate present defined by survival, where planning beyond the next moment appears unrealistic or even dangerous. This contraction reshapes identity itself, as roles tied to development—student, parent, worker, caregiver—lose their temporal grounding (Hamamra et al. 2025). Without a viable future, meaning becomes compressed, and existence is reduced to maintaining life rather than building it. Participants frequently described a form of existence reduced to endurance and survival, echoing broader discussions of politically managed life characterized by extreme precarity, diminished agency, and the erosion of meaningful future horizons (Agamben 2015).

As this condition persists, time itself becomes a source of exhaustion. The harm described is not only event-based but durational: it accumulates through repetition, uncertainty, and the absence of resolution. Waiting ceases to function as an interval between events and becomes the dominant structure of experience. This produces a distinct form of fatigue, one that precedes and exceeds physical exertion (Abuward et al. 2025). Individuals report being drained not by what has occurred, but by the unending continuation of what may occur. The absence of closure undermines the expectation that time leads toward relief, replacing it with a sense that duration itself perpetuates suffering. Hope, initially tied to waiting, gradually dissolves as waiting becomes synonymous with non-arrival. In this way, time loses its restorative potential and is instead experienced as a burden carried forward without transformation (Veronese et al. 2026a, 2026b).

Taken together, these themes converge on a coherent pattern: time is systematically reorganized to sustain conditions of vulnerability, anticipation, depletion, and loss. Violence operates not only through immediate acts, but through the continuous shaping of temporal experience—holding life in suspension, orienting the future toward threat, exhausting bodies through delay, embedding memory in loss, and erasing the horizon of possibility. Psychological processes—fear, vigilance, fatigue, withdrawal—are inseparable from these conditions, emerging as adaptive responses to an environment in which danger is ongoing and structurally maintained (Knittel 2023). The result is a form of lived experience in which survival is achieved at the cost of temporal agency, and where time itself becomes one of the primary terrains through which harm is enacted and endured.



Limitations

This study should be interpreted in light of several conceptual, methodological, and contextual limitations that both delimit its claims and clarify the conditions under which its contributions should be understood.

This study should be interpreted in light of several methodological and contextual considerations. The empirical material was generated between September 2024 and March 2025 during an ongoing phase of genocidal violence, displacement, and humanitarian collapse in Gaza. As such, the findings capture participants' experiences within a specific historical moment and should not be assumed to represent the full range of temporal experiences that may emerge across different phases of violence, displacement, or potential reconstruction. Experiences of waiting, anticipation, loss, and futurity are likely to evolve alongside changing political and material conditions.

At the same time, the temporal location of the study constitutes an important strength. Collecting narratives during rather than after mass violence provided access to forms of waiting, uncertainty, anticipatory fear, temporal exhaustion, and disrupted futurity that may be difficult to reconstruct retrospectively. The analysis therefore offers insight into how temporal experience is lived while violence remains ongoing rather than remembered from a position of temporal distance.

As with all qualitative research, the study relies on narrative accounts shaped by memory, emotion, language, and context. However, because the focus of the study is precisely on lived experiences of temporality, anticipation, and meaning-making, these interpretive dimensions should be understood not simply as methodological constraints but as integral features of the phenomenon under investigation.

Taken together, these limitations do not undermine the study's central argument but rather situate it within the realities of researching life under conditions where time itself is unstable. They highlight the importance of reading the findings as contextually embedded, theoretically informed, and ethically attentive interpretations of how war is lived through the reconfiguration of temporal experience.

Conclusion

This article set out to examine how war in Gaza is lived not only through destruction in space but through the systematic reorganization of time (Nijim 2025). Across the narratives, a consistent pattern emerges: temporal experience is fractured, suspended, and weaponized in ways that reshape psychological life, social relations, and the very possibility of continuity. Time ceases to function as a medium of progression and instead becomes a terrain of control, anticipation, and depletion.

The findings show that suspended life is not merely a metaphor but a lived condition in which individuals remain alive while their capacity to move through time is interrupted. Waiting, far from being passive, becomes an imposed structure that governs access to safety, resources, and movement. It is through delay—rather than only through immediate force—that bodies are exhausted, agency is constrained, and compliance is produced. In parallel, anticipation is reoriented toward harm, embed-



ding fear within the future and transforming time into a continuous rehearsal of loss (Ihmoud 2023).

As temporal continuity collapses, memory reorganizes around rupture, and the accumulation of loss becomes the primary measure of time. This reconfiguration intensifies emotional burden, as duration does not facilitate recovery but deepens the imprint of violence. At the same time, the future is progressively erased. The inability to imagine or plan beyond the immediate present reflects not only uncertainty but a structural foreclosure of possibility. Life contracts into survival, and identity itself is reshaped by the absence of forward movement (Aon et al. 2025).

Perhaps most critically, the study highlights how duration operates as a form of harm. The exhaustion described by participants is not reducible to discrete events but emerges from the relentless continuation of waiting without resolution. Time loses its restorative potential and instead becomes a burden carried forward, producing fatigue, withdrawal, and the erosion of hope. In this sense, violence is not only enacted through moments of destruction but through the sustained shaping of temporal conditions that keep life in a state of prolonged vulnerability (Cavazzoni et al. 2025; Veronese et al. 2026a, 2026b).

Politically, the findings suggest that delay, uncertainty, and the withholding of movement, care, and safety should not be understood merely as humanitarian failures. They constitute mechanisms through which violence is prolonged and distributed across everyday life. Recognizing temporality as a site of political power expands how genocide, war, and civilian suffering are conceptualized and documented.

By foregrounding temporality, this article contributes to a reorientation of how war is understood across disciplines. It demonstrates that psychological distress in contexts of ongoing violence cannot be fully grasped without attending to how time is experienced, controlled, and endured. More broadly, it suggests that contemporary forms of warfare operate not only by determining who lives and who dies, but by governing how life unfolds—or fails to unfold—over time. To attend to time, therefore, is to attend to one of the central mechanisms through which violence persists, accumulates, and becomes livable in its unlivability.

Author contributions GV, BH, FM conceptualized the study, developed the theoretical framework, and supervised all phases of the research process. F M, BH contributed to the study design, coordinated data collection in Gaza, and provided critical input on the cultural and contextual interpretation of the findings. GV contributed to the theoretical positioning of the study, particularly the integration of decolonial and critical perspectives, and supported the interpretation of the data within broader socio-political and cultural frameworks. All authors contributed to the development of the methodology. Data collection was conducted by a trained local researcher under the supervision of FM. GV led the data analysis using reflexive thematic analysis, with ongoing interpretive discussions among all authors to refine themes and ensure coherence between data and theoretical framework. All authors contributed to the writing, revision, and final approval of the manuscript and agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

Funding Open access funding provided by Università degli Studi di Milano - Bicocca within the CRUI-CARE Agreement.

Data availability No datasets were generated or analysed during the current study.



Declarations

Competing interests The authors declare no competing interests.

Open Access This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this article are included in the article's Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

References

- Abdallah, Y., N. Al Kai, C. Nakhle, R. Khaty, C. El Nahas, R. Istanbuli, M. T. Abou-Saleh, E. G. Karam, and L. J. Boulos. 2026. Mental health amidst chronic crises: The case of Arab countries from the Middle East. *Conflict and Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13031-026-00612-4>
- Abudayya, A., G. T. F. Bruaset, H. B. Nyhus, R. Aburukba, and R. Tofthagen. 2023. Consequences of war-related traumatic stress among Palestinian young people in the Gaza Strip: A scoping review. *Mental Health & Prevention* 32:200305.
- Abuward, O.H., C. Fiscione, N.M. Abulibda, A. Mustafa, and G. Veronese. 2025. Do you think all of us are mentally sick because of this horror? Mental health under genocide in Gaza. *International Journal of Human Rights in Healthcare* 18 (4): 225–243.
- Agamben, G. 2015. From the state of control to a praxis of destituent power. In *Resisting biopolitics: Philosophical, political, and performative strategies*, ed. A. Žukauskaitė and S.E. Wilmer, 33–41. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315764955-8>.
- Aon, M., N. Bracq, L. Michaelsen, T. S. Madsen, B. Alsourani, Y. Abdel Ghafour, H. Shaqqura, and R. Alsourani. 2025. What is there left after losing oneself? 100 testimonies of genocidal torture from Gaza. *Torture* 35(2–3):61–78.
- Bargu, B. 2016. Another necropolitics. *Theory & Event*. 19(1, Suppl.). <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/610222>
- Berlant, L. 2007. Slow death (sovereignty, obesity, lateral agency). *Critical Inquiry* 33(4):754–780. <https://doi.org/10.1086/521568>
- Bouchard, D. 2025. *Humanity's ruins: ethics, feminism, and genocidal humanitarianism*. Duke University Press.
- Braun, V., and V. Clarke. 2019. Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative research in sport exercise and health* 11(4):589–597.
- Braun, V., V. Clarke, N. Hayfield, L. Davey, and E. Jenkinson. 2023. Doing reflexive thematic analysis. In *Supporting research in counselling and psychotherapy: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research*, 19–38. Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Britt, L., and W. H. Hammett. 2024. Trauma as cultural capital: A critical feminist theory of trauma discourse. *Hypatia* 39(3):514–532.
- Bryant, R. 2016. On critical times: Return, repetition, and the uncanny present. *History and Anthropology* 27(1):19–31.
- Cavazzoni, F., A. Mustafa, C. Sousa, O.H. Abuward, M.A. Nofal, and G. Veronese. 2025. Anyone else struggling with work-genocide balance? Exploring the psychological and social impact of collective annihilation in Gaza. *Culture Medicine and Psychiatry*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11013-025-09953-0>.
- Charlson, F., M. Van Ommeren, A. Flaxman, J. Cornett, H. Whiteford, and S. Saxena. 2019. New WHO prevalence estimates of mental disorders in conflict settings: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Lancet* 394 (10194): 240–248.
- Chung, R. 2026. The anatomy of social dismemberment. *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13698230.2026.2645293>.
- Dader, K. 2025. Temporal ruination: Scarcity, entrapment, and the affective intensities of time in Gaza. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02637758251407082>.



- Diamant, I., and M. Kalfon Hakhmigari. 2025. Temporal disorientation during war: Associations with work-family conflict, emotional distress, and burnout. *Frontiers in Psychology* 16: 1565639.
- Dubow, E. F., P. Boxer, L. R. Huesmann, S. Landau, S. Dvir Gvirsman, K. Shikaki, and J. Ginges. 2025. Political violence exposure and youth aggression in the context of the social ecological systems and family stress models: A four-wave prospective study of Israeli and Palestinian youth. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0165025425137776>
- Eagle, G., and D. Kaminer. 2013. Continuous traumatic stress: Expanding the lexicon of traumatic stress. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 19(2):85.
- Elkahlout, G. 2025. Aid denied, justice deferred: The Gaza genocide and the collapse of humanitarianism. *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15423166251379294>.
- Farhat, T., S. Ibrahim, Z. Abdul-Sater, and G. Abu-Sittah. 2023. Responding to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza: Damned if You do... Damned if You don't! *Annals of Global Health* 89 (1): 53.
- Faris, M., A. S. Abutair, R. M. Elfarrar, N. A. Barqawi, A. M. Firwana, R. M. Firwana, Abu Shaban, N. Alser, O. Shaban, N. Ayyad, M., and R. A. Badawi. 2025a. Catastrophic famine in Gaza: Unprecedented levels of hunger post-October 7th. A real population-based study from the Gaza Strip. *Plos One* 20(5):e0309854. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0309854>
- Faris, M.E., T.B. Hassen, C. Parra-López, and A. Hassoun. 2025b. From acute food insecurity to famine: The struggle of Gazans for food security. In *War on Gaza: Consequences on sustainability and global security*, ed. M.E. Faris, T.B. Hassen, C. Parra-López, and A. Hassoun, 29–42. Springer Nature Switzerland.
- Funez-Flores, J. I. 2026. Curriculum theorizing in a time of genocide, scholasticide, and (counter) insurgency. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* 41(1):4–20.
- Golańska, D. 2023. Slowness as warfare: Towards a relational approach to political violence in the West Bank. *Geography Compass* 17 (11): e12725. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12725>.
- Grisham, E.L., N.M. Jones, R.C. Silver, and E.A. Holman. 2023. Do past events sow future fears? Temporal disintegration, distress, and fear of the future following collective trauma. *Clinical Psychological Science* 11 (6): 1064–1074.
- Gürçan, E.C. 2025. Rethinking world wars through a world-systems lens: A relational and contextual approach. *Journal of World-Systems Research* 31 (1): 391–416.
- Hamamra, B., F. Mahamid, and D. Bdier. 2025. Trauma and sleep disruption in Gaza: A qualitative content analysis of war-related effects. *BMC Psychology* 13 (1): 284.
- Hanbali, L., E.J.L. Kwong, A. Neilson, J. Smith, S. Hafez, and R. Khoury. 2024. Israeli necropolitics and the pursuit of health justice in Palestine. *BMJ Global Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2023-014942>.
- Hazer, L., and G. Gredebäck. 2023. The effects of war, displacement, and trauma on child development. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 10 (1): 1–19.
- Hollifield, M., Gory, A., Siedjak, J., Nguyen, L., Holmgreen, L., & Hobfoll, S.(2016). The benefit of conserving and gaining resources after trauma: A systematic review. *Journal of Clinical Medicine*, 5, 104. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jcm5110104>
- Hyndman, J. 2019. Unsettling feminist geopolitics: Forging feminist political geographies of violence and displacement. *Gender Place & Culture* 26 (1): 3–29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2018.1561427>.
- Ihmoud, S. 2023. Love in a time of genocide: A Palestinian litany for survival. *Journal of Palestine Studies* 52(4):87–94.
- Jackson, B., and L. S. Sadler. 2022. Structural violence: An evolutionary concept analysis. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 78(11):3495–3516.
- Jamei, Y. A., and C. Barbui. 2024. Priority setting for mental health in Gaza. *The Lancet Psychiatry* 11(12):953–955.
- Jones, C. 2023. Gaza and the great march of return: Enduring violence and spaces of wounding. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 48(2):249–262.
- Jovanović, R., and A. Bermúdez. 2025. Memory of violence. *Current Opinion in Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2025.102174>.
- Khalil, K.A., G.T.F. Mohammed, A.B.M. Ahmed, S.S. Alrawa, H. Elawad, A.A. Almahal, M.E. Abdelrahman, S.M. Abdalla, M. Elhadi, O.A. Musa, and E.M. Ali. 2024. War-related trauma and posttraumatic stress disorder in refugees, displaced, and nondisplaced people during armed conflict in Sudan: A cross-sectional study. *Conflict and Health* 18 (1): 66. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13031-024-00566-9>.
- Knittel, S. C. 2023. Ecologies of violence: Cultural memory (studies) and the genocide–ecocide nexus. *Memory Studies* 16(6):1563–1578.



- Lugones, M. 2007. The coloniality of gender. In *Coloniality at large: Latin America and the postcolonial debate*, ed. M. Moraña, E. Dussel, and C.A. Jáuregui, 186–209. Duke University Press.
- Marshall, D.J., and C. Sousa. 2017. Decolonizing trauma: Liberation psychology and childhoodtrauma in Palestine. In C. Harker & K. Hörschelmann (Eds.), *Conflict, violence and peace* (pp. 287–306). Springer.
- Mbembe, A. 2003. Necropolitics. *Public Culture* 15(1):11–40. <https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-15-1-11>
- McIntosh, J. (2021). Dehumanization and systemic trauma: The psychological impacts of political violence and confinement in Gaza. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 50(3), 45–62.
- Miller, K.E., and A. Rasmussen. 2024. War exposure, daily stressors, and mental health 15 years on: Implications of an ecological framework for addressing the mental health of conflict-affected populations. *Epidemiology and Psychiatric Sciences* 33: e78. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S2045796024000830>.
- Muhammad, K. O., H. H. Hama, and H. A. Hama Karim. 2023. Memory and trauma in the Kurdistan genocide. *Ethnicities* 23(3):426–448.
- Munn, L. 2025. The politics of exhaustion: Enduring at the end of the world. *Ephemera: Theory & Politics in Organization* 25 (1): 45.
- Munoz, A., Girguis, S., Martin, L., & Hollifield, M. (2024). Applying and extending the conservation of resources (COR) model to trauma in US veterans. *Trauma Care*, 4(1), 22–30.
- Nijim, M. 2025. Gazacide: Palestinians from Refugeehood to ontological obliteration. *Critical Sociology* 51(7–8):1581–1603.
- Peteet, J. 2018. Closure's temporality: The cultural politics of time and waiting. *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 117(1):43–64. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00382876-4282037>
- Phipps, R. 2022. Anticipatory traumatic reaction as a framework for understanding the response of children and adolescents to the Russia-Ukraine military conflict. *Journal of Psychology* 10 (1): 8–12.
- Puar, J. K. 2015. The right to maim: Disablement and inhumanist biopolitics in Palestine. *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 114(2):403–412. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00382876-2883857>
- Quigley, J.B. 2026. When conditions of life can kill: Genocide in the Gaza Strip. *The Palestine Yearbook of International Law Online* 25 (1): 17–48.
- Saleem, J., S. Hameed, M. N. Shehzad, R. B. Shahzad, N. Ali, M. M. Aftab, M. Hussain, A. Raza, S. Iqbal, T. Mahmood, and H. Z. Khan. 2026. Exploring civilian minds and lives during the 2025 India–Pakistan conflict: A phenomenological study in Lahore, Pakistan. *British Medical Journal Open* 16(2):e105937. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2025-105937>
- Segal, R. 2025. Israeli settler colonial genocide. *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 53(1):182–191.
- Shalhoub-Kevorkian, N. 2020. Gun to body: Mental health against unchilding. *International Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies* 17(2):126–145.
- Shalhoub-Kevorkian, N. 2025. Five pillars of zionist genocidal apparatus: A palestinian problematization of genocide studies. *Journal of Genocide Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2025.2556589>.
- Shaw, M. 2025. Gaza and the structure of genocide in palestine. *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 53 (2): 416–422.
- Singh, A. 2019. Time and waiting: The fulcrum of Palestinian identity. *Arab Studies Quarterly* 41(4):317–331. <https://doi.org/10.13169/arabstudquar.41.4.0317>
- Stevens, G., G. Eagle, D. Kaminer, and C. Higson-Smith. 2013. Continuous traumatic stress: Conceptual conversations in contexts of global conflict, violence and trauma. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 19(2):75–84.
- Taha, A.M., C. Sabet, S.A. Nada, S. Abuzerr, and D. Nguyen. 2024. Addressing the mental health crisis among children in Gaza. *The Lancet Psychiatry* 11 (4): 249–250.
- UNICEF. 2024. Humanitarian action for children: State of Palestine (Revision 3). <https://www.unicef.org/appeals/state-of-palestine>
- Veronese, G., B. Hamamra, F. Mahamid, and F. Cavazzoni. 2026b. Gendered survival under genocidal violence: A decolonial feminist narrative study of women and displaced families in Gaza. *Women's Studies International Forum* 116:103301.
- Veronese, G., C. Fiscione, N. Abudlebdh, A. Almqayyad, and T. Chemaly. 2026a. Psychological burdens during genocide: A psychocartographic qualitative study of civilian experiences in Gaza, October 2024–February 2025. *Social Science & Medicine*.
- Zafran, H., B.L. Beagan, D. Shephard, H. Lauckner, Whalley Hammell, K. Lee Bunting, and K. Jarus. 2026. Shattering silence, inviting dialogue: Anti-oppressive occupational therapy during the genocide of Palestinians. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy* 93 (1): 5–19.



- Zaydah, H.Y.A. 2025. Living through the war in Gaza: An autoethnographic account of psychological, humanitarian, and physical suffering of Gaza's inhabitants during the war in Gaza. *Torture* 35 (2–3): 28–49.
- Zedan, H.F. 2025. We have no safety at all”: Insecurity and continuous traumatic stress among Palestinian adolescents in East Jerusalem. *Frontiers in Psychology* 16: 1665579.
- Ziadah, R., C. Henderson, O. Jabary Salamanca, S. Plonski, C. Chua, R. Al Sanah, and E. El Khazen. 2026. Disruptive geographies and the war on Gaza: Infrastructure and global solidarity. *Geopolitics* 31 (1): 453–491.

Publisher's Note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Authors and Affiliations

Guido Veronese^{1,2}  · Bilal Hamamra³ · Fayez Mahamid⁴

✉ Guido Veronese
guido.veronese@unimib.it

Bilal Hamamra
bilalhamamra@najah.edu

Fayez Mahamid
Mahamid@najah.edu

- ¹ Department of Human Sciences for Education “R. Massa”, University of Milano-Bicocca, Milan, Italy
- ² Department of Psychology, Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa
- ³ Department of English and Literature, An-Najah National University, Nablus, Occupied Palestinian Territory
- ⁴ Department of Psychology and Counseling, An-Najah National University, Nablus, Occupied Palestinian Territory

