



## Report on the Impact of the Recent War in 2023 on the Cultural Heritage in Gaza Strip - Palestine

November 7, 2023

### Acknowledgment



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After the ongoing war in the Gaza lasting for nearly a month, with the current casualty count exceeding 10,000 Palestinians, at least a third of whom are children, and another million displaced within the first two weeks, a "comprehensive siege" has been imposed on Gaza. Food, water, fuel, and aid have been cut off. The human loss in this war is significant, and the suffering is immense, affecting not only the people but also the cultural heritage and identity of the Palestinian people in Gaza.

This preliminary report has been prepared amidst the ongoing conflict, responding to the requests and desires of numerous concerned individuals, researchers, and local residents to shed light on the status of cultural heritage. It's important to note that Heritage for Peace organization is a non-profit entity dedicated to safeguarding and protecting cultural heritage worldwide, maintaining neutrality, and opposing any harm or violence to cultural heritage sites anywhere in the world.

We express our heartfelt gratitude to the activists on the ground who have played a major and prominent role in compiling this report for the Gaza Strip in Palestine. We hope they and their families are safe, as we have lost contact with them for the past 7 days. We wish a speedy recovery to all the wounded and security and stability to all civilians.

The humanitarian consequences and the immense tragedy being experienced by the people of Gaza are enormous. We have prepared this report to shed light on another aspect of suffering: the loss of heritage associated with this land. Given our role and responsibility as heritage preservation specialists, especially in times of crisis, it is our duty and commitment to assist and support local community activists. We must highlight the historical and cultural sites that hold cultural value for the local residents and inhabitants of this geographical zone – Gaza.



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## **Heritage for Peace**

We are an international group of individuals working in the field of heritage, firmly believing that cultural heritage serves as common ground for dialogue and a powerful tool for promoting peace. Our collective mission is to provide steadfast support for heritage workers, regardless of their nationality or religious affiliation, as they dedicate themselves to preserving cultural heritage for the flourishing of future generations.

Our organization consistently maintains a neutral stance, with our programs focused on empowering heritage specialists to confront unique challenges, such as safeguarding artifacts, sites, museums, and libraries during times of armed conflict. Additionally, we invite people from all around the world, regardless of their faith or ethnicity, to engage in dialogue and collaborate to preserve their shared heritage. We emphasize the importance of working together to achieve these crucial objectives.

For more information, please visit our website: [Heritage for Peace](#)

## **ANSCH - Arab Network of Civil Society Organizations for Cultural Heritage Protection**

The Arab Network of Civil Society Organizations for Cultural Heritage Protection (ANSCH) represents a collaborative effort between the non-governmental organization Heritage for Peace (H4P) and numerous civil society organizations (CSOs) across various Arab countries. ANSCH was founded as a dedicated heritage initiative with a mission centered around partnering with government agencies, civil society organizations, and non-profit organizations to identify,



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manage, plan, and preserve cultural heritage resources, including archaeological sites, historical landmarks, museums, and other priceless cultural assets. Currently, ANSCH focuses its efforts on regions facing significant heritage challenges, including conflict zones and disaster-stricken areas.

For more information, please visit their website: [ANSCH](https://www.ansch.org/)



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## Introduction

Cultural and historical heritage stands as a significant component of the cultural identity of the Palestinian people. The city of Gaza is rich with numerous archaeological sites and buildings that hold cultural, religious, and historical significance, reflecting the history and civilization of the Palestinian people and embodying the culture, customs, and traditions of the various populations that have inhabited this region over time. These sites vary, including mosques, churches, and baths. Unfortunately, the recent war has directly and indirectly affected many of these archaeological sites, resulting in the destruction of a significant portion of the cultural heritage in the Gaza Strip.

Recently, under these circumstances, the French archaeologist, Professor Humbert, who has worked in Palestine for decades, emphasized to [MailOnline](#) the irreparable loss of the region's cultural heritage. He stated, "*Gaza's society is sensitive to its heritage, but the crushing that has been inflicted by the occupying forces over the past fifty years means that vital priorities like feeding, caring for, and educating the population have pushed cultural heritage aside as a luxury for wealthy countries.*"

As Professor Humbert points out, the population growth in the densely populated region often leads to the construction of homes and municipal buildings on top of archaeological sites.

This report will provide a detailed overview of the importance of Gaza's heritage, including an explanation of its most important heritage landmarks, and it will highlight the key places affected during a month of war. Nearly 104 sites have been identified as impacted during this month.



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We hope that through this report, we can draw the attention of the international community to the fact that the Palestinian people in Gaza are also suffering the loss of their heritage, history, and cultural identity alongside their significant humanitarian suffering resulting from this war.



Figure 1: This map displays the locations of nine archaeological and cultural sites in Gaza, the majority of which are located in or near the evacuation zone, where the conflict is likely at its most intense. (Source: by WILLIAM HUNTER 2023) Available online at this link: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-12649597/The-archaeological-sites-risk-wiped-Israeli-Palestinian-conflict-oldest-Christian-Church-Gaza-unprecedented-Roman-necropolis-containing-130-tombs.html>



Figure 2: This map illustrates the findings of Professor Humbert, demonstrating how historical sites like this Roman settlement are often overlaid with modern housing. (Source: by WILLIAM HUNTER 2023) Available online at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-12649597/The-archaeological-sites-risk-wiped-Israeli-Palestinian-conflict-oldest-Christian-Church-Gaza-unprecedented-Roman-necropolis-containing-130-tombs.html>

## First: The Significance of Cultural Heritage in Gaza Strip

### Brief about Gaza

The relatively small region of the Gaza Strip, located within the State of Palestine, is characterized by a diverse array of historical heritage and the fertility of its soil. It is renowned for agriculture, particularly citrus farming, and boasts a coastal view along the Mediterranean Sea, which has also made it known for fishing and trade. Its strategic geographic location positions it as a gateway connecting Asia and Africa.



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### **Historical Background:**

Gaza City holds immense strategic importance due to its geographic location between two contrasting regions. To the south is the arid coastal plain of Palestine, characterized by sandy dunes and poor vegetation, while to the north lies a temperate region with fertile clay soil, abundant rainfall, and rich vegetation. Gaza has been historically referred to as a crucial gateway between Asia and Africa. According to the "Tell el-Amarna Letters" dating from 1402-1347 BCE, it was named "Gazatu" and "Gazata," considered one of the three major regions in Canaan. It was called "Iyy Gazat" (This Gaza) as an important military and commercial center on the route of "Horos."

The prestigious status of Gaza is further corroborated by the numerous Pharaonic artifacts found in the city and its vicinity. Notable discoveries include figurines, jewelry, gold necklaces, ivory and marble statues, copper and marble vessels, and tools.<sup>1</sup>

As the Pharaonic state began to decline by the end of the 12th century BCE, the Palestinian people arrived in South Palestine around 1200 BCE. Gaza was one of their key cities, and they eventually merged with its indigenous Arab Canaanite population. Gaza, meaning "strength," was named as such by the Assyrians in their own language, but with variations in pronunciation such as "AZUTU," "Ha-za-ti," and "Ha-za-ta-a." The city was subdued by the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III in 734 BCE, who fortified it. "Hanno," its governor, reportedly fled to Egypt.

In 603 BCE, Gaza fell under the control of the Babylonian ruler Nebuchadnezzar. In 529 BCE, it resisted strongly under the leadership of "Cambyz" and remained a fortified city. During this period of Persian rule, it was visited by the historian "Herodotus," who likened its beauty to the city of "Sardis," the capital of the Lydians. The name "Gaza" became associated with the word "treasure" in the Persian language because, as legend has it, Cambyz, also known as Gaza, had buried a treasure there. The city played a significant role in global trade.

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<sup>1</sup> It is believed that the city of Gaza originally originated in the area of Tel el-Ajjul and later moved to its current location.



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In 332 BCE, it was besieged by Alexander the Great for two months, earning the title "City of Perfumes."<sup>2</sup>

			
Figure (4) Coffin with Bones	Figure (3) Golden Pharaonic Necklace	Figure (2) Pharaonic Coffin	Figure (1) Clay Coffin
			
Figure (7) Burnt Clay Statues	Figure (6) Pharaonic Queen Statue	Figure (5) Alabaster Tools	
			
Figure (10) Pottery Tools from the Nabatean Period - Gaza	Figure (9) Greek currency with the head of Alexander - Port of Anthedon	Figure (8) Tools for Storing Perfumes, Incense, and Oils.	
Source: Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities			

The spread of Christianity in Gaza City during the 5th century AD was attributed to a religious figure named "Perfereus." He destroyed the temple of "Marne" and built a church on its site,

<sup>2</sup> Carol A. M. Gulker, The City of Gaza in the Roman & Byzantine Periods, Bar International, Series, 1987.



with some historians asserting that it currently stands on the location of the Al-Omari Mosque. As a result, monasteries and churches proliferated in various parts of Gaza and its surrounding areas, including Gaza's coastal region, Jabalia, Deir al-Balah, Abasan, and Beit Lahia. Numerous coins minted in Gaza and its port, Anthedon, depicted images of these churches. This fact is also evident in a map discovered in Ma'daba in 1884, highlighting several churches established during the era of Emperor Justinian in the mid-3rd century AD.

Until that time, Gaza City served as a major stop for Arab traders during their seasonal trading journeys, including both winter and summer trips. It was on one such journey during the mid-6th century AD that the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) grandfather, Hashim ibn Abd Manaf, passed away.

In February 634 CE, Gaza City was conquered by the Muslim Arab leader Amr ibn al-As, returning it to the embrace of the Arabs and Muslims. They established mosques, and Gaza regained its significant economic status. During the Umayyad and Abbasid periods, Gaza became a center for coin minting.<sup>3</sup>

Gaza reached its peak during the Mamluk era, briefly serving as the Palestinian capital for several centuries when Jerusalem operated as a regional city dependent on Damascus and itself. This historical richness is substantiated by various Islamic, Roman, and Byzantine coins found in the region.

In 1516, the Ottoman Turks took control of Gaza City, where they established mosques, religious schools (zawiyas), and markets, as well as constructed palaces during the early years of their rule. Many of these historical structures still exist today. In the period between 1916 and

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<sup>3</sup> (Mubeid, Salim. "Arab Palestinian Coins and Their Foreign Civilian Counterparts." General Authority for Books, Cairo, 1990.)



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1917, intense battles took place on the outskirts of southern and eastern Gaza City between Allied forces led by the British and the defending Ottoman troops.

From 1948 to 1950, Gaza City received hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees who were forced to leave their homes as a result of the Nakba (catastrophe). Since that period, Gaza has endured widespread destruction, population displacement, numerous conflicts, sieges, and violence between the Palestinian and Israeli sides. The most recent conflict began in early October 2023, resulting in one of the fiercest and deadliest wars in the city's history, with civilians and historical properties and heritage in Gaza at risk of destruction and violence.

## **Second: The situation of Cultural Heritage in the Gaza Strip before the 2023 War**

Architectural heritage represents the material aspect of cultural heritage and, at the same time, reflects the social, economic, and political conditions experienced by people in different historical periods. It is also a direct response to the experiences of previous civilizations. A field survey was conducted to inventory and collect information related to all components of architectural heritage in the Gaza, gaining insights into the existing conditions and challenges.

One of the most significant factors affecting the state of cultural heritage is the expansion of settlements, which often leads to the destruction of many cultural and heritage buildings and the disappearance of the Arab cultural heritage in the region. This happens in the absence of a clear architectural preservation vision and plan, the non-application of international laws and conventions, and the lack of coordination between official and unofficial institutions to preserve the identities and traditions of the people amidst this cultural humanitarian crisis.

## **1- Classification of Architectural Heritage in the Gaza**



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According to the available sources, the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities classified the architectural heritage in the Gaza Strip based on the function and purpose of the building or monument. Figures and tables below illustrate the classification of architectural heritage in the region. According to field surveys conducted by researchers during the study's preparation period, the total number of architectural heritage sites reached 325, distributed across the governorates of the Gaza Strip (see Tables 1 and 2). It's important to note that this number continuously changes due to various factors.

Based on field surveys, the total architectural heritage in Gaza Governorate amounts to 195 sites, representing 60% of the overall architectural heritage in the Gaza Strip. In Khan Younis Governorate, there are 42 sites, making up 13% of the total architectural heritage, while researchers documented 39 sites in the Northern Governorate (12%). The Central Governorate contains 32 sites (9.8%), and Rafah Governorate has 17 sites (5%).

Table 1 details the numbers of architectural heritage classified based on the adopted criteria. Historic houses account for over half of this heritage with 186 houses, making up 57.2%. They are followed by hills and archaeological sites (39 hills, 12%), mosques and prayer places (21 mosques, 6.46%), shrines and zawiyas (13 shrines, 8%), buildings of value (22 buildings, 6.76%), cemeteries (9 cemeteries, 2.76%), monasteries and churches (5 churches, 1.5%), palaces (5 palaces, 1.5%), markets (4 markets, 1.23%), khans and asbat (2 each, 0.61%), and fountains (1, 0.3%). There is only one hammam, accounting for 0.3% of the total architectural heritage in the Gaza Strip.

**Table (1) Classification of Architectural Heritage in the Gaza Strip Distributed Across Governorates.**



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No.	Classification	North	Gaza	Central	Khan Younis	Rafah	Total	Percentage (%)
1	Mosques and Masjids	5	14	1	1	-	21	6.46
2	Monasteries and Churches	2	2	1	-	-	5	1.5
3	Palaces	1	3	-	1	-	5	1.5
4	Schools	-	1	-	1	-	2	0.61
5	Markets	-	3	-	1	-	4	1.23
6	Inns	-	1	-	1	-	2	0.61
7	Fountains	-	1	-	-	-	1	0.30
8	Archaeological Hills	6	7	8	10	8	39	12
9	Historic Houses	15	135	15	16	5	186	57.2
10	Cemeteries	3	4	2	-	-	9	2.76
11	Corners	-	2	1	1	-	4	1.23
12	Shrines	4	9	2	5	2	22	6.76
13	Soap Houses	-	2	-	-	-	2	0.61



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No.	Classification	North	Gaza	Central	Khan Younis	Rafah	Total	Percentage (%)
14	Baths	-	1	-	-	-	1	0.30
15	Valuable Buildings	3	10	2	5	2	22	6.76
Total		39	195	32	42	17	325	100%

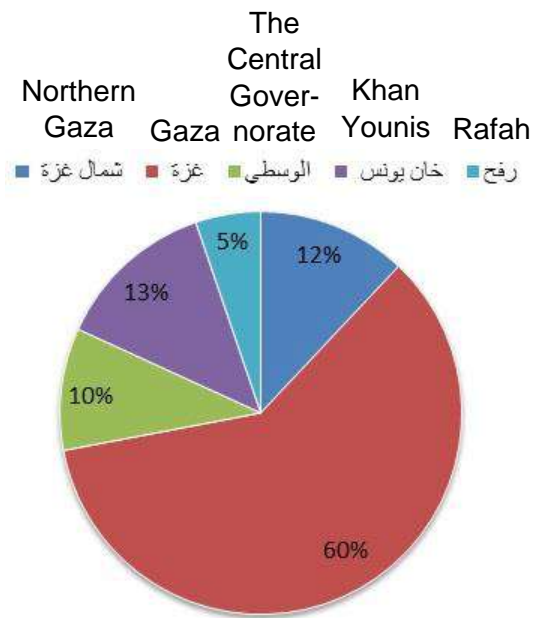


Figure 3: This graph illustrates the numbers of architectural heritage in the Gaza governorates



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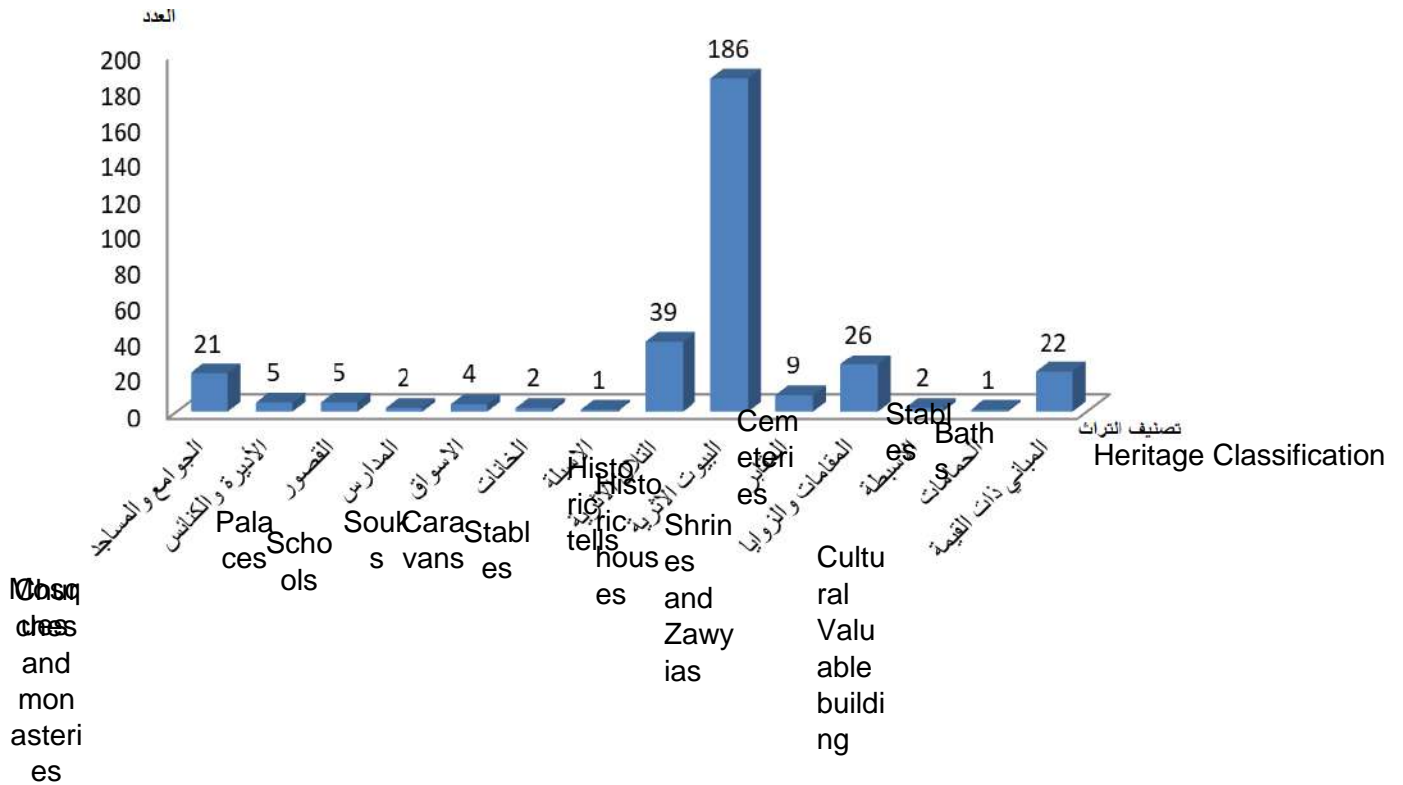


Figure 4: A graphical representation illustrating the numbers of architectural heritage in the governorates of Gaza according to the adopted classification.

## 2. Important Heritage Sites in the Gaza:

Gaza Strip is a home to significant and valuable number of historical and heritage sites that date back to different historical periods. These buildings are primarily located in the heart of the city (the old town), with additional buildings and sites scattered throughout other cities in the Gaza. Here, we will highlight the most important heritage sites and buildings in the Gaza, categorized by the respective governorates and according to the classification adopted by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. Additionally, the era to which each site belongs will be mentioned. Given the multitude of important landmarks, one or two examples from the mentioned



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categories will be listed in the aforementioned tables and figures to represent an important classification. For example, the Al-Omari Mosque and the Sayyid Hashim Mosque will be mentioned in the category of mosques, and Table (2) illustrates the most important heritage sites and valuable landmarks in Gaza.



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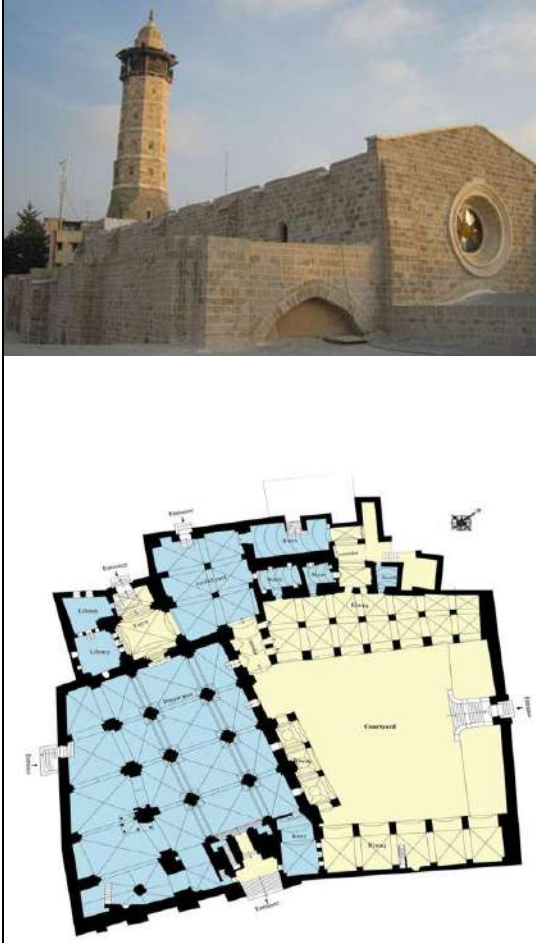
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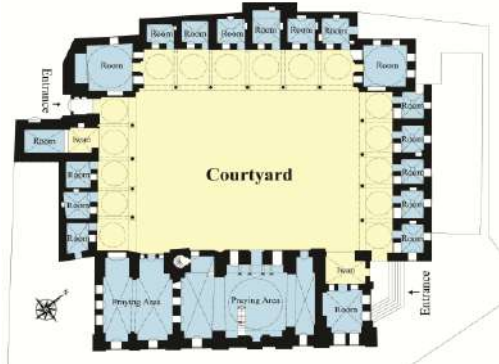



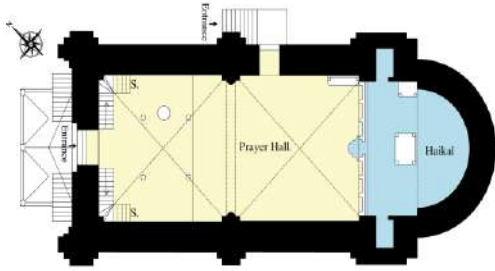

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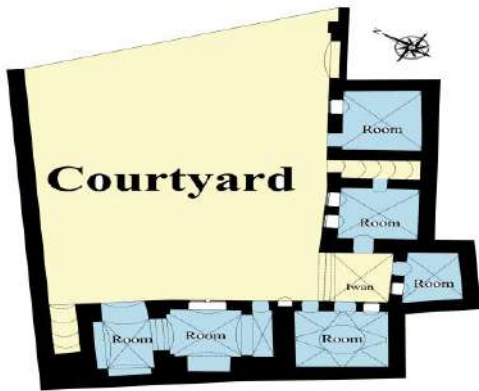
**Table (2) lists the most important archaeological and heritage landmarks in the Gaza Strip.**

Category	Landmark/ Monument	Brief	Pictures
<p><b>Mosques and Masjids</b></p>	<p><b>The Great Omari Mosque</b></p>	<p>The Great Omari Mosque is one of the most important and largest historical mosques in Palestine. It is located in the heart of the old town in the Daraj neighborhood of Gaza City. The mosque covers an area of 4100 square meters and features basilica-style architecture dating back to the 12th century AD. It is known for its sturdy construction, beautiful marble columns, inscriptions, and decorations that date back to the Mamluk and Ottoman eras.</p> <p>Historical accounts suggest that the mosque was constructed in stages and had various uses throughout its history. It was initially a temple, then converted into a church, and later transformed into a mosque after the Islamic conquest. To the north of the mosque, there is a courtyard with an approximate area of 1900 square meters.</p> <p>Some of the columns used in the construction were brought from the remnants of demolished churches.</p>	

	<p><b>Sayed Hashem Mosque</b></p>	<p>The Sayed Hashem Mosque is one of the important historical mosques in Gaza City. It is located in the Daraj neighborhood, covering an area of approximately 2400 square meters. It is one of the most beautiful and ancient mosques in Gaza. The mosque includes a shrine beneath its dome, believed to be the tomb of Sayed Hashem bin Abd Manaf, the great-grandfather of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. The current mosque was constructed during the Ottoman era in the Mamluk architectural style. The horizontal section (plan) of the mosque reveals an open, square courtyard in the middle, surrounded by three exterior corridors for prayers. The main prayer hall of the mosque is almost square and is covered by intersecting vaults. It contains a mihrab (prayer niche) oriented towards the qibla (Mecca's direction) and a minbar (pulpit) that was renovated in the year 1850 under the sponsorship of the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Majid.</p>	 
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<p><b>Monasteries and Churches</b></p>	<p><b>The Church of Saint Pervierios (Greek Orthodox)</b></p>	<p>The Church of Saint Pervierios is considered one of the oldest archaeological churches in the old town of Gaza, located in the Zaytoun neighborhood, one of its oldest neighborhoods. It was built in the year 425 AD through the efforts of Saint Pervierios, after whom it was named. The church now houses his shrine.</p> <p>The horizontal layout reveals that the church consists of a large hall with a ceiling covered by intersecting vaults, shaped like a cross, supported by stone columns. The walls are made of solid stone, approximately 80 cm thick.</p>	 
<p><b>Palaces</b></p>	<p><b>Al-Basha Palace (Dar Al-Sa'adah)</b></p>	<p>character of Islamic architecture. It is located in the Darraj neighborhood on the eastern side of the old town. This neighborhood is one of the richest in historical buildings, highlighting Gaza's rich history throughout the ages. There is no foundation plaque that dates the construction of this building, but it is said to date back to Mamluk Islamic architecture, as indicated by the presence of a lion emblem at the main entrance of the palace.</p>	



		<p>The horizontal section shows two separate buildings within the palace, consisting of rooms and a building made of sandstone with a system of intersecting vaults. The Ministry of Tourism converted it into a government museum at the beginning of 2010.</p>	
<p><b>Schools</b></p>	<p><b>Al-Kamiliyah School</b></p>	<p>The Kamiliyah School is the only remaining historical school in Gaza, located in the heart of the old town in Gaza. It was named after the Ayyubid king Al-Kamil, who constructed it in the year 653 AH (1237 AD). Since its establishment, the school was used to house the poor, students, and traders and remained active until 1930.</p> <p>According to the horizontal plan, the school covers an area of 573 square meters and consists of two floors. The school is designed with a central courtyard surrounded by rooms, each of which opens its doors and windows to the inner courtyard. The main facade is uniform and features a pointed arch made of marble. The school was constructed using sandstone and follows the prevalent</p>	 



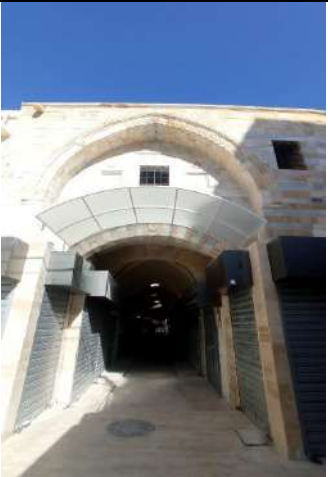
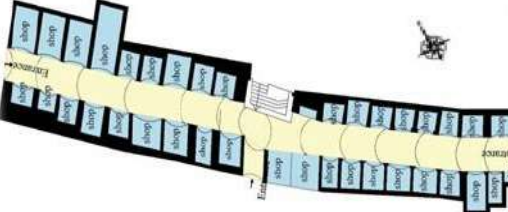

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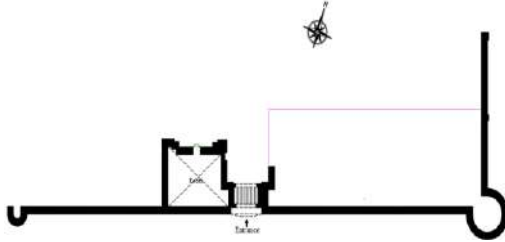

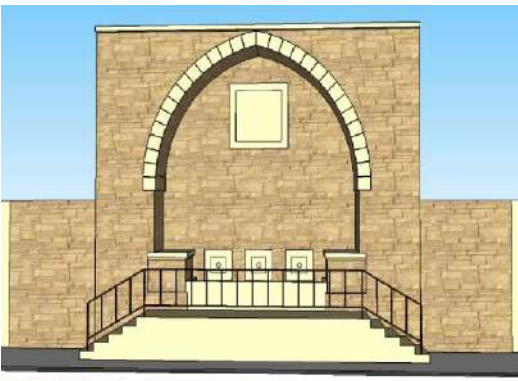



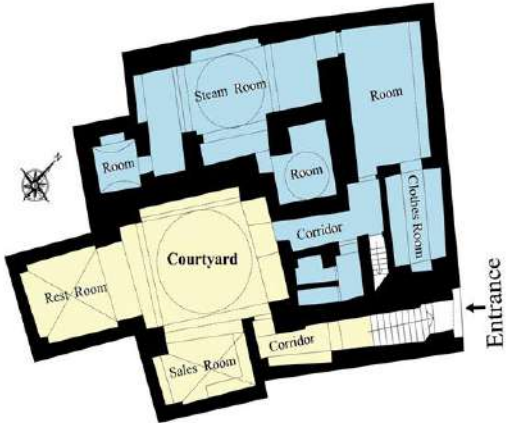
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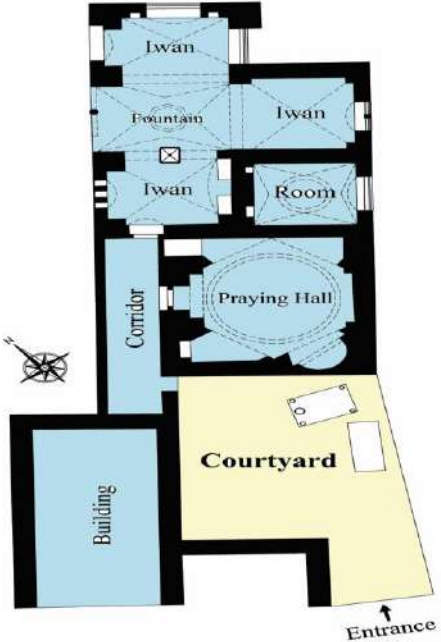
		building style during the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods.	
<b>Souks</b>	<b>The Qaysariyah Market</b>	<p>The Qaysariyah Market, located in the Daraj neighborhood of the Old City in Gaza, is one of the most significant historical markets that has endured in Gaza. It is commonly referred to as the "Gold Market" due to the presence of shops dealing in gold. The market dates back to the Mamluk era (1260-1517 AD) and is situated adjacent to the southern wall of the Great Umayyad Mosque.</p> <p>The market is characterized by its narrow, vaulted street, approximately 60 meters long and with a width not exceeding 3 meters. On either side of the street, small commercial shops are lined up, each with a width of around 2 meters. The eastern entrance is marked by a large pointed arch.</p>	 
<b>Stables /Khan</b>		<p>Khan al-Amir Younes is located in the center of Khan Yunis city in the southern Gaza Strip. It was constructed by Amir Younes bin Abdullah al-Nouruzi al-Dawadari in the year 789 AH (1387 CE). The purpose of building it</p>	


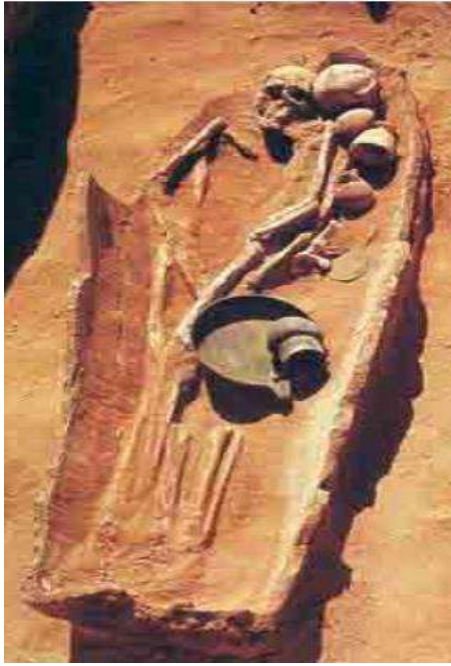
		<p>was to serve trade caravans and to function as a postal station, and it is often referred to as the fortress. According to the layout, the khan is square-shaped with each side measuring 80 meters. It consists of two floors, with the first floor serving as storage rooms, while the second floor was designated for accommodating guests, including rooms for residence, a mosque, and a reception area.</p>	
<p><b>The Asbala / Stables</b></p>	<p><b>Sabil Al-Rifaiyah</b></p>	<p>"Sabil Al-Rifaiyah Road" is located in the Al-Daraj neighborhood of Gaza City, on Unity Street, a few meters to the east of the Pasha's Palace. It was supplied with water from the Birket Al-Burj, which was next to it for monitoring and defense.</p> <p>This road was constructed by Bahram Pasha, the son of Mustafa Pasha, in the year 976 AH (1568 CE). The current name of the road is "Sabil Al-Rifaiyah," named after Rifat Pasha Al-Jarkasi, the governor of Gaza, who renovated and restored it in the year 1278 AH (1861 CE). It was built using solid sandstone and has an architectural shape characterized by a</p>	 

		<p>tapered arch on both sides. Between these arches, there are three prominent water outlets within a square frame. These outlets were equipped with faucets to draw water from the road's basin to provide water for people. It was restored in 2014 under the supervision of the contributor to this report.</p>	
<p><b>Baths</b></p>	<p><b>Hamam Al-Samra</b></p>	<p>The archaeological Hamam Al-Samra is located in the Al-Zaytoun neighborhood in the old town of Gaza City. It is a splendid example of bathhouses and is actually the only surviving model of its kind. The hamam features a roof with a dome adorned with round openings decorated with colored glass, adding elegance and beauty to the place. Additionally, the beautiful flooring of the hamam is paved with marble rounds, squares, and triangles of various colors.</p> <p>According to the horizontal layout, you enter the hamam through a broken entrance, leading to an external passageway that resembles a winding corridor with a knotted semi-barrel vault. This passage</p>	 


		<p>leads to a hall containing an octagonal-shaped fountain for cold water, surrounded by four iwans. It was restored for the third time during the preparation of the study in March 2023 under the supervision of one of the contributors to this report, marking a significant phase in the history of the hammam.</p>	
<p><b>Sables/Asbata</b></p>	<p><b>Al-Alami and Kasab</b></p>	<p>Al-Alami and Kasab are among the most important historical and archaeological landmarks in the Al-Daraj neighborhood. They are characterized by the Islamic architectural style from the Ottoman period. They consist of a covered passageway with intersecting vaults between two main buildings, under which passes a narrow street no more than three meters wide. Above the covered passageway, there is a room covered by a dome, with its entrance from one of the houses overlooking the Asbata. The Asbata is usually named after the family that owns the upper room. These are the only surviving Asbata in the Gaza Strip, and they were restored by the College of Engineering at the</p>	 



		<p>Islamic University in 2003 (1423 AH).</p>	
<p><b>Maqams and zawiya</b></p>	<p><b>The Ahmadia Zawiya</b></p>	<p>The Ahmadia Zawiya is located in the Al-Daraj neighborhood of the Old Town in Gaza. It is attributed to Sheikh Ahmad al-Badawi, one of the most famous Sufi scholars who lived in Gaza. He was born and lived in the city of Tanta in Egypt until he reached the age of forty-one. He then moved to Gaza, where he passed away and was buried in 1276 CE (674 AH). He was called "al-Badawi" because he always covered his head and face.</p> <p>Sheikh al-Badawi's followers in Egypt and beyond formed a Sufi sect known as the "Ahmadiyya." It is believed that the marble tomb built near the south wall is related to Princess Qutlu Khatoun, a Mamluk princess who is thought to have funded the construction of the Ahmadia Zawiya. The inscription on the tomb mentions the name of the deceased and the date of her passing.</p> <p>The zawiya is distinguished by its polygonal room with six pointed arches, and it</p>	 

		<p>features a beautiful and spacious mihrab (prayer niche). The towering dome is supported by a cylindrical base.</p> <p>Please let me know if you need further information or have any specific questions.</p>	
<p><b>Cemeteries</b></p>	<p><b>Deir al-Balah Cemetery</b></p>	<p>Deir al-Balah Cemetery" is considered one of the most important historical and archaeological cemeteries in Gaza, reflecting the history of the Palestinian people over several ages.</p> <p>Numerous archaeological excavations were conducted on the coast of Deir al-Balah between 1972 and 1982, revealing the most significant and crucial cemetery dating back to the Late Bronze Age (1550-1200 BCE).</p> <p>This cemetery is attributed to the so-called "Kings of the Palestinians" and consists of a notable collection of human-shaped pottery coffins. These coffins form the largest collection ever discovered in Palestine and resemble Egyptian Pharaonic coffins. They were found in tombs carved from red clay or carcar stone, facing the sea, and were later stolen by Moshe Dayan.</p>	 



<p><b>Historic Houses</b></p>	<p><b>Khudari House</b></p>	<p>The Khudari House is located on Ghulayni Street in the Old City near the Osman Kashkash Mosque. It complements the architectural character of the Old City. The house is surrounded by historic houses and stands higher than the street level. Its construction style involves load-bearing walls and pillars supporting the ceiling, primarily made of sandstone with some marble columns. The thickness of the stone walls ranges from 60-70 centimeters. The ceiling system consists of intersecting vaults. According to the horizontal layout, the entrance leads to a corridor with a small room branching off it. The corridor opens into a courtyard, which in turn connects to five rooms and two iwans. There's also a sixth room that opens onto one of the iwans.</p>	
<p><b>Archaeological Tell</b></p>	<p><b>The archaeological site of Tel Rafah</b></p>	<p>The archaeological site of Tel Rafah is located in the southern city of Rafah, adjacent to the Egyptian border, covering an area of 150 dunams. This Tel has significant historical value, dating back to both the Greek and</p>	





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	<p>Roman eras. It is one of the largest archaeological hills in the Gaza Strip. The primary reason for the richness of this site is its strategic geographic location, serving as a meeting point for international routes connecting Asia and Africa. It was a center for global and local trade between Palestine and neighboring countries.</p> <p>It is believed that the Tel holds valuable collections of archaeological artifacts buried beneath its surface, as well as architectural remnants of buildings that once stood in the Tel's vicinity. In 2010, parts of the Tel were discovered, leading to the recovery of silver coins, pottery, and various tools, unveiling architectural features of a Roman palace, including circular columns.</p>	 
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<p><b>valuable buildings</b></p>	<p><b>Rashad Al-Shawa Cultural Center</b></p>	<p>Located in the Rimal neighborhood in the western part of Gaza City, this is a contemporary architectural landmark designed by the architect Saad Mahfouz. It was nominated for the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 1992 and was completed in 1988. It is considered the first cultural center built in Palestine, with the aim of ending the cultural and civilizational isolation that Palestinians suffered due to Israeli occupation, which sought to erase their cultural, civilizational, and national identity. The long building consists of two floors with a triangular roof. The center includes a meeting place where people gather for celebrations, a library called "Diana Tamari Sabagh Library," and a theater<sup>4</sup></p>	
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<sup>4</sup> Mahmoud Siedam, "Reviving Heritage Architectural Values in Contemporary Local Architecture - A Case Study of Gaza City," Master's Thesis, Islamic University of Gaza, 2013.



### Third: The Effects of the Current War in 2023 on the Cultural Heritage in the Gaza Strip:

The cultural heritage in the Gaza Strip has been subjected to direct and indirect damage and losses due to the recent war, which began on the seventh of October in 2023 and continues to date without interruption. Various forms of targeting affected archaeological sites, buildings, and facilities. Some were completely destroyed, some were partially damaged, and others suffered severe harm. These damages and losses can be summarized as follows:

The most important archaeological sites that were damaged as a result of the recent attacks in 2023.			
No.	Site Name	Damage Description	Type of Attack
1.	Jabaliya Byzantine Church	Complete Destruction	Direct Shelling
2.	Perferius Orthodox Church	Almost Complete Destruction	Direct Shelling
3.	Omari Mosque (Jabaliya)	Complete Destruction	Direct Shelling



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The most important archaeological sites that were damaged as a result of the recent attacks in 2023.			
No.	Site Name	Damage Description	Type of Attack
4.	Balakhiah Site (Anthedon) in Gaza	Complete Destruction	Direct Shelling
5.	Sheikh Shaaban Mosque	Complete Destruction	Direct Shelling
6.	Al-Zafar Dmari Mosque (Shuja'iya)	Complete Destruction	Direct Shelling
7.	Al-Saqa Archaeological House (Shuja'iya)	Partial Damage	Indirect Shelling
8.	Tel Al-Mansatar (Gaza)	Partial Damage	Direct Shelling
9.	English Cemetery (Gaza)	Partial Damage	Indirect Shelling
10.	St. Hilarion Monastery (Nuseirat)	Partial Damage	Indirect Shelling



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The most important archaeological sites that were damaged as a result of the recent attacks in 2023.			
No.	Site Name	Damage Description	Type of Attack
11.	Tel Al-Sakan (Al-Zahra)	Partial Damage	Direct Shelling
12.	Tell 86 (Al-Qarara)	Partial Damage	Direct Shelling
13.	Mazen Market (East Khan Yunis)	Partial Damage	Direct Shelling
14.	Maqam Khaleel Al-Rahman (Abasan)	Complete Destruction	Direct Shelling
15.	Rafah Archaeological Tel	Partial Damage	Direct Shelling
16.	Omari Mosque (Gaza)	Partial Damage	Indirect Shelling
17.	Sayed Hashem Mosque (Gaza)	Partial Damage	Direct Shelling



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<b>The most important archaeological sites that were damaged as a result of the recent attacks in 2023.</b>			
<b>No.</b>	<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Damage Description</b>	<b>Type of Attack</b>
18.	Pasha Palace (Gaza)	Partial Damage	Indirect Shelling
19.	English Cemetery (Al-Zawaida)	Partial Damage	Indirect Shelling
20.	Maqam Al-Khidr (Deir Al-Balah)	Complete Destruction	Direct Shelling
21.	Deir Al-Balah Museum	Partial Damage	Indirect Shelling
22.	Al-Fakhari Site	Partial Damage	Direct Shelling
23.	Maqam Al-Nabi Yusuf (Bani Suheila)	Partial Damage	Indirect Shelling



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The most important archaeological sites that were damaged as a result of the recent attacks in 2023.			
No.	Site Name	Damage Description	Type of Attack
24.	More than 70 Archaeological Houses	Partial Damage	Indirect Shelling
25.	Center for Manuscripts and Ancient Documents	Complete Destruction	Direct Shelling

### Numbers and statistics

Type of Artifact	Quantity	Damage Description	Notes
Mosque	3	Complete Destruction	Direct Shelling
Mosque	1	Partial Damage	Direct Shelling



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Type of Artifact	Quantity	Damage Description	Notes
Mosque	4	Partial Damage	Indirect Shelling
Church	1	Partial Damage	Direct Shelling
Church	3	Partial Damage	Indirect Shelling
Archaeological Site	4	Partial Damage	Direct Shelling
Archaeological Site	5	Partial Damage	Indirect Shelling
Historical House	5	Partial Damage	Direct Shelling
Historical House	68	Partial Damage	Indirect Shelling
Shrine	1	Complete Destruction	Indirect Shelling



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Type of Artifact	Quantity	Damage Description	Notes
Shrine	4	Partial Damage	Indirect Shelling
Cemetery	3	Partial Damage	Indirect Shelling
Museum	2	Partial Damage	Indirect Shelling
Total Quantity	104		

### Assessment of damage

Type of Damage	Quantity	Notes
Complete Destruction	4	



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Partial Damage	11	
Partial Damage	89	
Total Quantity	104	

### Pictures of the damages and destruction in the archaeological sector



As a Greek Orthodox Church, the building has been in use for nearly 1000 years and is still in use to this day. (Source: by William Hunter 2023) available online at [<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-12649597/The-archaeological-sites-risk-wiped-Israeli-Palestinian-conflict-oldest-Christian-Church-Gaza-unprecedented-Roman-necropolis-containing-130-tombs.html>].



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A missile struck the church on Friday, resulting in the deaths of several people who were taking shelter inside and the collapse of a nearby building. (Source: by William Hunter 2023) available online at [\[https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-12649597/The-archaeological-sites-risk-wiped-Israeli-Palestinian-conflict-oldest-Christian-Church-Gaza-unprecedented-Roman-necropolis-containing-130-tombs.html\]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-12649597/The-archaeological-sites-risk-wiped-Israeli-Palestinian-conflict-oldest-Christian-Church-Gaza-unprecedented-Roman-necropolis-containing-130-tombs.html)



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The Byzantine Church in Jabalia - Jabalia.



Damages to Aslan Church - Beit Lahia



Damages to Al-Omari Mosque - Jabalia



Shuja'ya neighborhood - Gaza



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Damage to the old port of Gaza - Al-Balahiya, Gaza.



Damage to the Monastery of Saint Hilarion - Al-Nuseirat



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Damage to Tell Al-Sakan Archaeological Site - Al-Zahraa



Damage to the Maqam Khalil Al-Rahman - Abasan



Photos of the damage to the historical houses - Old Town Gaza



Damage to the archaeological Tel Rafah - Rafah



Other damage photos - Gaza



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