

# Assessing the Gaza Death Toll After Eighteen Months of War

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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In-Depth Reports

**Health officials have compiled a largely comprehensive list, but questions remain about the Gaza ministry's opaque revision process and vetting of family reports—along with unknown deaths and missing persons.**

In May 2025, the Hamas-run Gaza Ministry of Health released its ninth list of the dead since the war began in October 2023. The document—spotlighting the massive scale of the human tragedy unleashed by Hamas's massacre—reflects a significant effort by Gaza health officials to record and identify all those killed. Yet methodological questions persist about the ministry's opaque revision process and vetting of reports from family members. Moreover, the tally itself is far from complete, exemplified by unknowns about unreported deaths and missing persons that could eventually reshape media narratives about the war's cost. And the ministry's findings remain irreconcilable with the competing, entirely false figures published by the Hamas-run Government Media Office.

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In this Policy Note, which follows up on a [related study \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/how-hamas-manipulates-gaza-fatality-numbers-examining-male-undercount-and-other\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/how-hamas-manipulates-gaza-fatality-numbers-examining-male-undercount-and-other) from January 2024, Gabriel Epstein meticulously analyzes Gaza fatality reporting, including through first-time discussions of the Health Ministry's use of placeholder identification numbers and questionable revision practices. Experts and journalists will also find guidelines for responsibly navigating often divergent fatality reports emerging from Gaza, Israel, and international organizations.



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