



A Preliminary Report from Librarians and Archivists with Palestine




The destruction of cultural heritage in Gaza impoverishes the collective identity of the Palestinian people, irrevocably denies them their history, and violates their sovereignty.

In this report, we offer a partial list of archives, libraries, and museums in Gaza that have been destroyed, damaged, or looted by Israeli armed forces since October 7, 2023. **This report is necessarily incomplete.** It is very difficult to determine the status of archives, libraries, and museums in Gaza during the ongoing Israeli bombardment. Current conditions in Gaza, such as the targeting of journalists, frequent communication blackouts, and extensive damage to the built environment pose an immediate threat to safety. **Moreover, archivists and librarians have been repeatedly displaced, injured, or killed,** making it even more difficult to take stock of the damage to cultural heritage.

This is an abbreviation of the original report: "Israeli Damage to Archives, Libraries, and Museums in Gaza, October 2023-January 2024" by Librarians and Archivists with Palestine.

To access the full report in English and Arabic, please visit:

tinyurl.com/gazareport2024



Image Sources:

@schoolstudents4palestine on Instagram
 "Gaza's Central Archives building lies in ruins after Israeli air strike," Middle East Eye YouTube, November 30, 2023.

Sheehan, Dan. "Gaza's main public library has been destroyed by Israeli bombing," Lithub.com, November 27, 2023.

We compile and offer this information with the understanding that the erasure of Palestinian culture and history has long been an Israeli tactic of war and occupation, a means to further limit the self-determination of the Palestinian people.

We bring a focus on libraries, archives, and museums as sites of knowledge, community spaces, and repositories of cultural heritage. The destruction of libraries represents the loss of not only book collections, but the efforts of Gaza's librarians to acquire, care for, and provide access to reading materials, despite Israel's ongoing blockade of the Gaza Strip.



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

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

Islamic University of Gaza Library (Gaza City) was destroyed on October 9, 2023.

Al-Israa University Library and National Museum (near Gaza City) was destroyed by Israeli military controlled detonation on January 18, 2024. The museum was looted prior to destruction.

Al-Quds Open University Library (Gaza City) was reported destroyed on December 6, 2023.

Jawahrial Nehru Library, Al-Azhar University (Gaza City): University campus was destroyed on October 19, 2023, though reports do not mention the library specifically.

ARCHIVES & RARE BOOKS

Central Archives of Gaza City, Gaza City Hall (Gaza City) was reported destroyed on November 29, 2023. The archives contained 150 years of records pertaining to Gaza's history.

Omari Mosque and Library (Gaza City) was destroyed on December 8, 2023. The mosque was built in the 7th century and contained one of the most significant collections of rare books in Palestine, including works dating to the 14th century.

MARTYRED INFORMATION WORKERS

Abdul Karim Hashash (October 23, 2023) with many members of his family.

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

Bilal Jadallah (November 19, 2023)

- Director of the Press House.

Doaa Al-Masri (December 7, 2023) with her parents and siblings.

- Librarian at the Edward Said Library.

Dr. Jihad Suleiman Al-Masri (October 17, 2023)

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

Iman Abu Saeed with her children Joudi and Ziyad and her husband Eyad.

- Oral historian at the Tamer Institute for Community Education.

Marwan Tarazi (October 19, 2023), killed with his wife Nihad and infant granddaughter Alin while sheltering at the Saint Porphyrius Orthodox Church.

- Archivist of Photo Kegham, Kegham Djeghalian's photography studio.

LIBRARIES

MUSEUMS

Akkad Museum was reported damaged on November 28, 2023. The museum includes about 2,800 artifacts from prehistoric to modern times.

Cultural Kararah Museum was reported severely damaged on December 6, 2023.

Deir Al-Balah Museum was reported partially damaged on November 7, 2023.

Ibrahim Abu Sha'ar Heritage Diwan (Southeast of Rafah) was reported destroyed on December 6, 2023, including an extensive collection of Bedouin heritage.

Khudari Museum was reported damaged on December 6, 2023.

Al-Qarara Cultural Museum, also known as the Khan Yunis Museum (Khan Yunis) was heavily damaged in October 2023, including complete destruction of the pottery collection.

Rafah Museum (Rafah) was completely destroyed by airstrikes in early October 2023.

Shahwan Museum was reported damaged on December 6, 2023.

LIBRARIES

Diana Tamari Sabbagh Library in the Rashad al-Shawa Cultural Center was destroyed by Israeli shelling on November 25, 2023. The building had been sheltering hundreds of displaced Palestinians.

Enaim Library was reported destroyed on December 6, 2023.

Gaza Municipal Library (Gaza City) was reported damaged by fire on November 27, 2023.

Kana'an Educational Development Institute (Al-Rimal, Gaza City) was reported destroyed, including the community library, on December 6, 2023.

Lubbud Library was reported destroyed on December 6, 2023.

Al-Nahda Library was reported destroyed on October 10, 2023.

Samir Mansour Bookshop and Library (Gaza City) was reported severely damaged on October 10, 2023.

Al-Shorouq Al-Daem Library was reported destroyed on December 6, 2023.