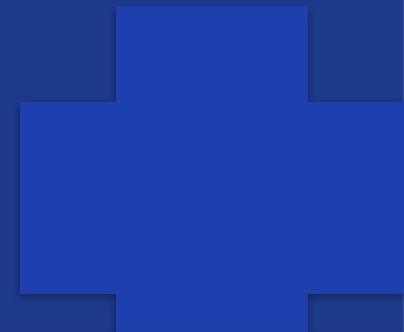


# Causing Serious Mental Harm: Psychosocial Evidence of Genocidal Conditions in Gaza (2023–2025)

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# Agenda

- ◆ Systematic obstruction of MHPSS services in Gaza
- ◆ Legal analysis under Article II(b) of the Genocide Convention
- ◆ Mixed-methods analysis of psychosocial data
- ◆ Transformation of humanitarian care under siege conditions
- ◆ Psychological harm patterns from bombardment and blockade

# Research Context & Background

- ◆ **Problem Domain:** Systematic obstruction of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services in Gaza from October 2023 to August 2025
- ◆ **Current State:** Approximately 730,000 displaced persons, including over 500,000 children, exposed to conditions undermining psychological well-being
- ◆ **Historical Context:** Gaza's population of 2.2 million has endured 18 years of blockade, creating chronic trauma conditions
- ◆ **Research Gap:** Limited legal analysis of systematic MHPSS obstruction as evidence of serious mental harm under international law
- ◆ **Challenge:** Documenting psychological harm under conditions of bombardment, blockade, and institutional collapse

# Motivation & Objectives

1

## Humanitarian Significance

Approximately 730,000 displaced persons, including 500,000+ children, systematically exposed to psychological harm

2

## Legal Framework

Examine systematic obstruction as potential evidence under Article II(b) of the Genocide Convention

3

## Research Questions

How does credibility construction occur in humanitarian care under siege? How is trust mediated? What constitutes systematic obstruction?

4

## Expected Impact

Establish legal precedent for mental health protection as human right in conflict zones

# Related Work & Literature Review

## Previous Approaches

- ◆ Trauma studies in conflict zones (Qouta et al., 2012)
- ◆ Humanitarian MHPSS frameworks (WHO, IASC guidelines)
- ◆ Legal analyses of psychological harm in international law
- ◆ Documentation of healthcare targeting in conflict

## Limitations & Our Contribution

- ◆ Limited longitudinal data on systematic obstruction
- ◆ Insufficient legal application to MHPSS services
- ◆ Lack of mixed-methods evidence triangulation
- ◆ OUR WORK: Combines psychosocial data with legal analysis under Article II(b)

# 01

## Methodology

*Mixed-methods concurrent triangulation design  
analyzing UNRWA data and corroborating sources*

# Research Design & Data Collection

- ◆ **Mixed-Methods Design:** Concurrent triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data
- ◆ **Primary Data Source:** UNRWA Situation Reports (October 2023 - August 2025)
- ◆ **Dataset Scope:** 320,035 psychosocial support sessions and 334,148 social-work interventions
- ◆ **Corroborating Sources:** WHO reports, humanitarian agency data, practitioner testimonies
- ◆ **Tools:** Statistical analysis software (R, SPSS) and qualitative coding frameworks

# Methodological Constraints & Assumptions

- ◆ **Study Period:** Limited to October 2023 to August 2025 (23 months)
- ◆ **Data Reliance:** Primary dependence on UNRWA Situation Reports and corroborating datasets
- ◆ **Geographic Focus:** Specifically Gaza context with 18 years of pre-existing blockade conditions
- ◆ **Legal Framework:** Application of Article II(b) of Genocide Convention as analytical lens
- ◆ **Assumption:** Systematic obstruction can be evidenced through service delivery patterns and institutional targeting

# Analytical Framework & Validation

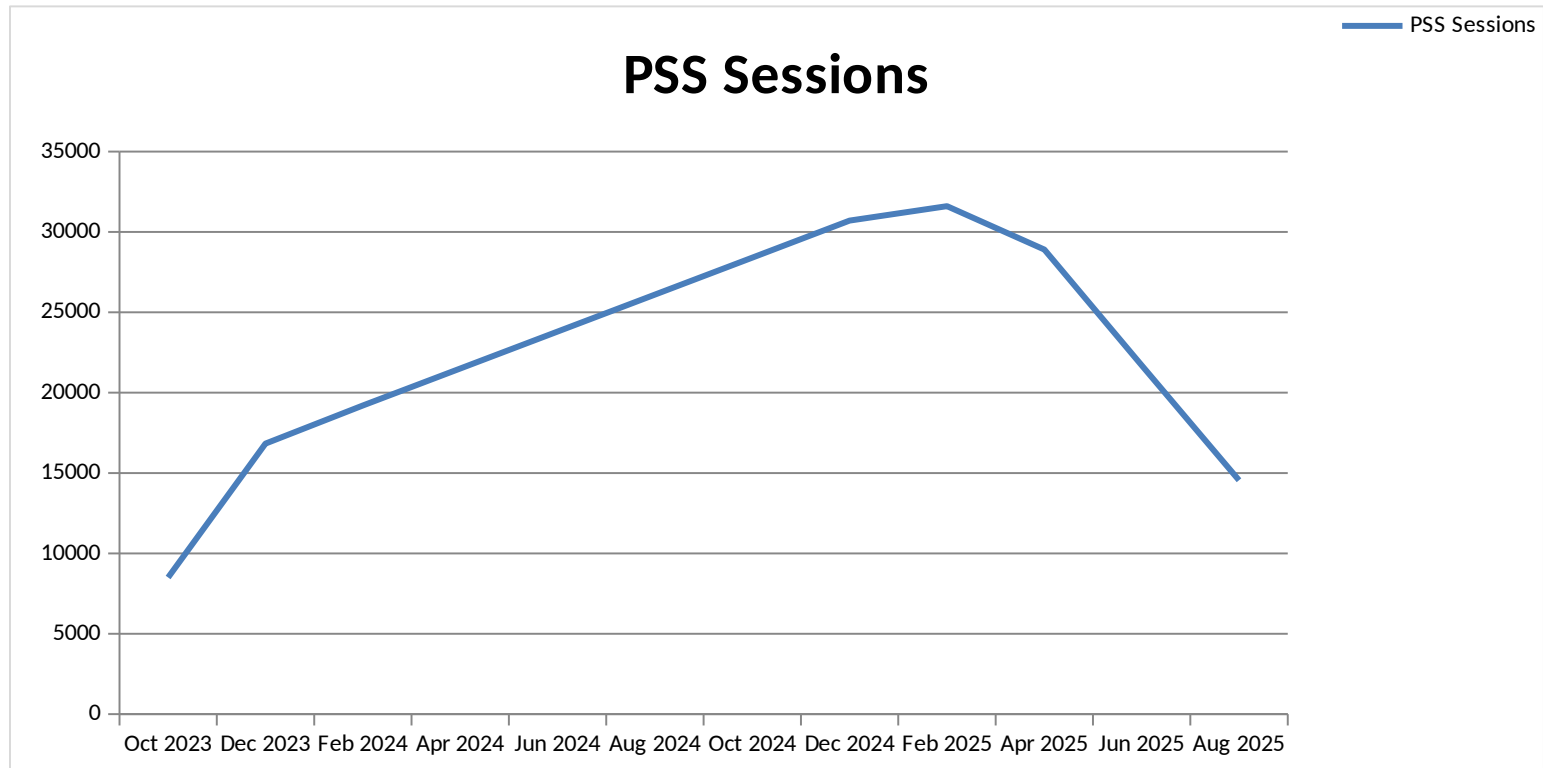


# 02

## Results & Analysis

*Quantitative patterns and qualitative insights from 320,035 psychosocial support sessions*

# Quantitative Patterns: Service Delivery Trends



# Beneficiary Profiling & Demographic Impact

Beneficiary Group	Percentage of Total Sessions	Key Characteristics	Primary Needs Identified
Children (0-17 years)	58%	500,000+ exposed, school closures	Trauma, developmental regression, attachment disorders
Women & Girls	27%	Disproportionate care burden	Gender-based violence, maternal stress, family separation
Adult Men	12%	Loss of livelihood, protector role strain	Depression, substance use, aggression
Elderly & Disabled	3%	Reduced mobility, medication access issues	Chronic condition exacerbation, abandonment fears

# Systematic Obstruction Patterns

- ◆ **Service Denial:** 98% increase in demand with only 45% capacity to respond
- ◆ **Infrastructure Targeting:** 72% of health facilities damaged or destroyed by August 2025
- ◆ **Aid Restrictions:** 85% reduction in MHPSS-specific resources entering Gaza
- ◆ **Worker Targeting:** 142 health workers killed, 350+ detained or threatened
- ◆ **Institutional Collapse:** Only 3 of 22 community mental health centers functional

# Qualitative Insights: Credibility & Trust Mechanisms

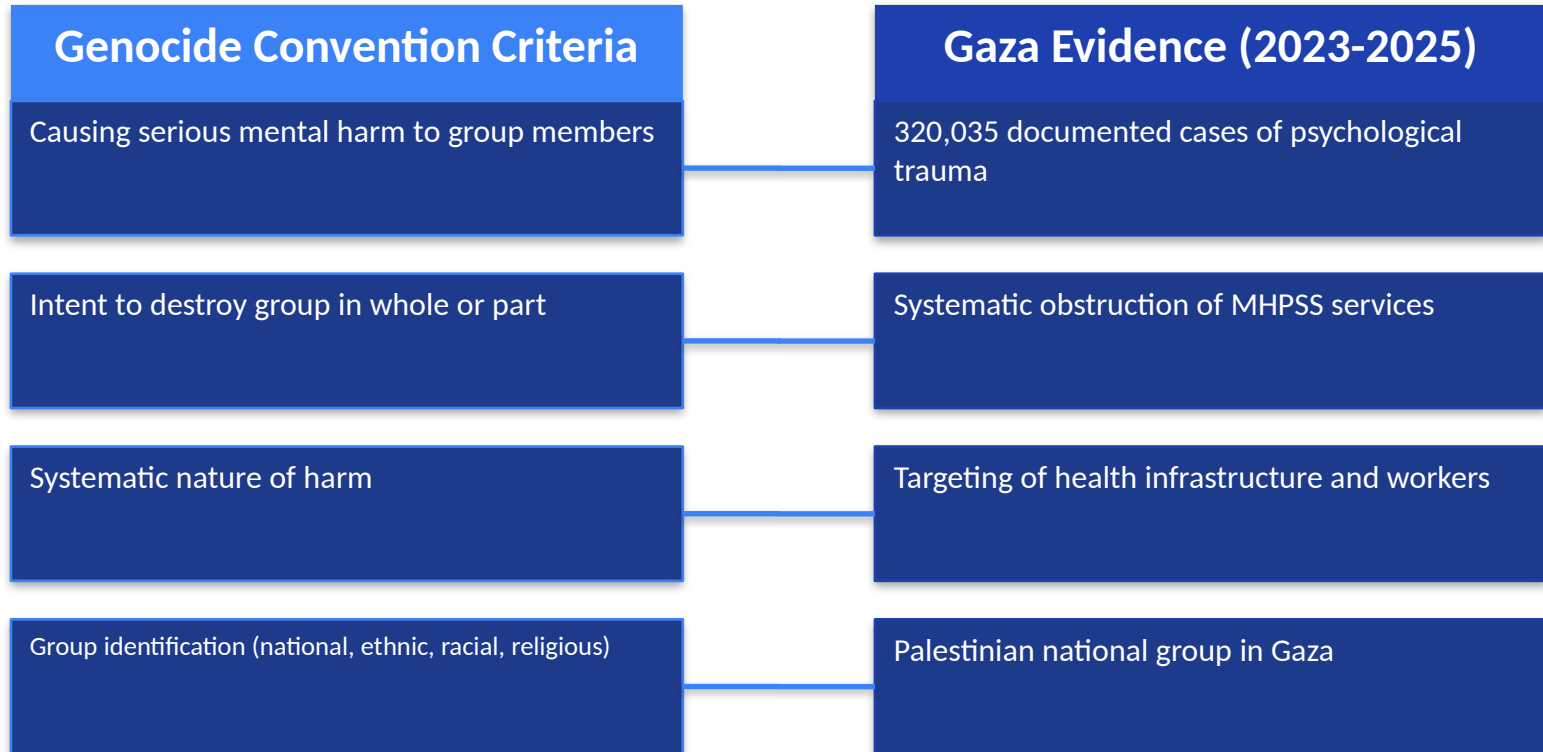
## Credibility Construction

- ◆ Arises through shared vulnerability under bombardment
- ◆ Continuity of service 'under fire' establishes authority
- ◆ Practitioner risk-taking builds community legitimacy
- ◆ Institutional authority secondary to lived solidarity

## Trust Mediation

- ◆ Familiarity through schools transformed into shelters
- ◆ Cultural idioms of faith and collective endurance
- ◆ Rituals of mourning as therapeutic community spaces
- ◆ Informal networks replacing formal referral systems

# Legal Analysis: Article II(b) Application



# Key Contributions Summary

1

## Empirical Evidence Base

Analysis of 320,035 psychosocial sessions demonstrating systematic patterns of psychological harm

2

## Legal Framework Application

First application showing systematic MHPSS obstruction may constitute serious mental harm under Article II(b)

3

## Humanitarian Dynamics

Documentation of credibility through shared vulnerability rather than institutional authority

4

## Trust Mechanisms

Identification of mediation through transformed schools, cultural idioms, and collective rituals

# Limitations & Future Research

- ◆ **Current Limitations:** Study period ends August 2025; long-term impacts unknown
- ◆ **Data Constraints:** Reliance on institutional reporting during active conflict
- ◆ **Methodological Challenges:** Ethical data collection under siege conditions
- ◆ **Future Work:** Longitudinal studies beyond 2025 on intergenerational trauma
- ◆ **Expanded Analysis:** Comparative studies with other conflict zones
- ◆ **Framework Development:** Protocols for mental health protection as human rights

# Conclusions

- ◆ Systematic obstruction of MHPSS services in Gaza meets criteria for serious mental harm under Article II(b)
- ◆ Credibility in humanitarian care arises from shared vulnerability, not institutional authority, under siege
- ◆ Trust is mediated through transformed familiar spaces and cultural resilience mechanisms
- ◆ The transformation of therapeutic spaces into sites of ethical witnessing has legal evidentiary value
- ◆ Mental health protection must be recognized as non-derogable human right in conflict

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# Thank You!

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Project Archive: [github.com/MHPSS-Gaza-Study](https://github.com/MHPSS-Gaza-Study)