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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND INFORMATION WARFARE IN THE 2023–2025 GAZA CONFLICT: A MIDDLE EASTERN PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The Middle East remains highly volatile, particularly in Gaza, where repeated violations of ceasefire agreements between Hamas and the Israel Defense Forces have caused substantial civilian casualties. The arrival of the new U.S. administration, with plans to expand military assistance to Israel, has intensified regional tensions. Concurrently, AI-enabled weapons and an intensified information war, including deepfakes and other digitally manipulated content, have exacerbated destruction and civilian harm. This study examines these developments, highlighting the intersection of AI, information warfare, and traditional conflict dynamics, and explores their implications for international humanitarian law and conflict governance.

Keywords: *Gaza Strip; ceasefire agreements; Middle East; AI-enabled weapons; information warfare; deepfakes; ICT*

Introduction

Modern armed conflicts increasingly operate on dual battlefields, combining kinetic operations with sophisticated digital strategies. The 2023–2025 Gaza war exemplifies this transformation, with AI-enabled weapons causing operational errors and mass civilian casualties, while deepfakes and coordinated cyber operations fueled an intense information war. Within months of escalation, civilian casualties in Gaza exceeded 20,000, with women and children disproportionately affected.

Traditional diplomatic approaches to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict have repeatedly failed to yield sustainable outcomes. In response, the United Nations explored AI-driven solutions to improve analytical insight. In 2023, it contracted CulturePulse to develop a digital twin of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict environment (Gilbert, 2023). This multi-agent AI model simulates behavioral, social, and economic dynamics, offering a virtual platform for testing policy interventions. While not a substitute for diplomacy, AI can illuminate structural drivers and potential consequences of political decisions, particularly within highly complex conflict environments.

AI and Information Warfare in Gaza

Gaza represents one of the most complex modern hybrid conflicts, combining physical

warfare with information operations, cyber-attacks, and AI-enabled drones. Social media platforms such as Telegram, WhatsApp, and TikTok were flooded with AI-generated deepfakes and disinformation. Some international media have contributed to biased narratives, often portraying Palestinians as the sole aggressors, while masking the scale of Israeli military operations (AL-Yaum AL-Saabeh, 2023).

This digital environment reflects coordinated campaigns, often orchestrated via dark-web networks, where actors refine messaging, imagery, timing, and targeting to maximize impact. Such operations create a "fog of war" that impedes verification and decision-making. Journalists face heightened risks, and public trust in traditional media diminishes, increasing reliance on social networks where misinformation proliferates unchecked (Dover, 2024).

AI in Israel's Lethal Autonomous Systems

Israel's deployment of AI-enabled lethal autonomous systems, such as *The Gospel* and *Lavender*, has accelerated target identification while raising civilian casualty rates (Securitylab.ru, 2023; Titi, 2023). These systems analyze large datasets – including drone imagery, intercepted communications, and behavioral patterns – to generate automated attack recommendations. Human oversight is limited, and error rates remain high, with tens of thousands of Palestinians labeled as potential militants, often targeted in private residences.

Further, large language models (LLMs) trained on extensive Arabic-language surveillance data have been deployed to monitor Palestinian social and political activity (Abraham, 2025). While these AI tools enhance operational efficiency, they raise profound ethical and legal concerns, including violations of digital rights, predictive policing of civilians, and the risk of algorithmic errors leading to lethal outcomes.

Israel's planned integration of AI systems into a unified "fire factory" by 2028 demonstrates the institutionalization of autonomous warfare, where predictive AI, autonomous weapons, and data-driven decision-making converge to reshape modern conflict conduct.

Discussion

The 2023–2025 Gaza conflict illustrates the profound integration of AI, digital surveillance, and information warfare into contemporary conflict. AI-enabled targeting systems accelerated military operations but produced high civilian casualties, revealing limitations in distinguishing combatants in densely populated areas. LLM-based surveillance introduces a new form of digital control, extending the reach of predictive governance into civilian life.

Simultaneously, disinformation campaigns, deepfakes, and dark-web operations have created an algorithmic fog of war, undermining trust in traditional media and shaping public perception. These developments demonstrate that AI, ICT, and digital surveillance are central not only to the conduct of hostilities but also to the information environment in which conflicts unfold.

Collectively, these factors exemplify the emerging logic of twenty-first-century warfare, where lethal autonomous systems, predictive AI, and coordinated information operations converge, often without sufficient ethical or legal oversight.

Conclusion and Policy Implications

AI-enabled warfare challenges established principles of international humanitarian law, particularly distinction, proportionality, and accountability. Predictive surveillance and pervasive disinformation threaten civilian safety and erode trust in diplomacy and humanitarian interventions. The Gaza conflict underscores the urgent need for international regulatory frameworks to govern AI deployment in military operations, safeguard populations, and prevent the normalization of algorithmically-driven violence and misinformation in future conflicts.

Effective policy responses must combine regulation of AI systems in military operations, oversight of information campaigns, and strengthening of media literacy to counter the societal impact of algorithmically-amplified disinformation. Only through integrated governance can the humanitarian consequences of AI-enabled conflict be mitigated.

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