

Gaza and The Hunger Games: Observations from a Real Dystopia

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The Hunger Games was designed to show how modern states can maintain control through food, fear, division, and televised power. Gaza has shown how these methods are not theoretical. They exist, are applied, and are visible in real time.

1. Structural Control

1.1 The Capitol and the Districts

In *The Hunger Games*, the Capitol is a militarised and technologically advanced centre. The rest of the population lives in peripheral districts, each enclosed, each denied mobility, each responsible for producing goods or services under surveillance and control. The districts cannot travel. They cannot trade freely. They cannot rise economically.

Gaza, since 2007, has operated under similar logic. Israel controls all its land borders, airspace, and maritime access. Gaza has no seaport. Its airport was bombed and never rebuilt. Movement of people in and out is denied, except through rare and highly controlled permits. Trade is restricted. Goods are embargoed. All imports and exports are tightly monitored by Israeli authorities.

Gaza is not a sovereign space. It is an enclosed district. A walled zone. It does not govern its own economy. It does not control its own food supply. It does not control its own water. It does not control its own airspace. It does not control its own borders.

1.2 The Peacekeepers and the IOF

In *The Hunger Games*, the Capitol deploys Peacekeepers to enforce discipline in the districts. These forces maintain order through visible military presence, arbitrary violence, and extrajudicial punishment.

In Gaza, Israeli forces operate similarly. Drones patrol the airspace constantly. Precision strikes can and do occur without notice. Entire families have been killed in their homes during declared ceasefires. Aid convoys have been attacked. Journalists have been targeted. Medical facilities have been destroyed.

Checkpoints, buffer zones, and "no-go areas" restrict movement. The Israeli army maintains full situational awareness of Gaza through aerial surveillance, biometric tracking, and cell tower monitoring.

2. Resource Control

2.1 Food as Weapon

In *The Hunger Games*, the Capitol withholds food from the districts to maintain subjugation. Food is distributed through "tesserae" — a system where children can receive extra rations in exchange for increased odds of being selected to die in the Games. The message is clear: compliance is rewarded with survival. Dissent is punished with hunger.

Israel has used food as a method of control in Gaza for over a decade. This is not an allegation. It is documented policy. In 2006, Israeli officials devised a system to allow in only the minimum calories required to prevent starvation. This policy was termed "putting the Gazans on a diet." It was not denied by the Israeli government.

Since 9 October 2023, the siege has been total. No fuel. No food. No water. No electricity. Israel's Defence Minister announced: "We are fighting human animals. We will act accordingly. No electricity, no food, no fuel." This was not military strategy. It was collective punishment.

Food convoys have been denied entry. Aid trucks have been turned away. When trucks do enter, they are often attacked. As of mid-2025, over 400 Palestinians have been killed while waiting at aid distribution points. Some shot. Others crushed or trampled in chaos. The flour they were collecting was often soaked in the blood of those shot down beside them.

2.2 Destruction of Agriculture

Gaza had agriculture. Before 2023, it grew its own olives, citrus, tomatoes, herbs, and wheat. Since October 2023, over 60% of its farmland has been destroyed or rendered inaccessible. Water infrastructure has been bombed. Greenhouses razed. Livestock killed. Fishing is restricted to two nautical miles from shore and enforced with live ammunition.

Gaza now depends almost entirely on international aid. The few bakeries and farms that remain operate under threat of attack. Several bakeries have been directly targeted by Israeli airstrikes. Aid-dependent bread lines are now mass casualty sites.

3. Surveillance and Biometric Policing

3.1 The Capitol's Eyes

In *The Hunger Games*, the Capitol sees everything. It uses technology to monitor every movement in the arena. Rebellion is detected before it begins. Tributes are tracked through implants. Drones capture every moment. Nothing is private. Nothing is secure. In Gaza, this model exists. Israel uses drones, AI-based target identification, biometric facial recognition systems, and spyware. The Blue Wolf system tracks Palestinian faces and logs them into a central surveillance network. Phone networks are monitored. Social media is tracked. Drones hover constantly. Gaza is under permanent digital occupation. Gaza has been described as the most surveilled place per capita on earth.

4. Death as Spectacle

4.1 The Arena

In *The Hunger Games*, tributes are placed in an arena. Cameras film their deaths. Wealthy citizens watch, bet, cheer, and consume. Death becomes performance. It becomes a deterrent. It becomes entertainment.

In Gaza, deaths are not hidden. They are publicised, streamed, analysed, and explained in Western media with clinical distance. Child deaths are debated. Hospital bombings are questioned. Mass killings are called "tragic errors" or "legitimate defence."

Israel's military has documented many of its own strikes with drone footage. It has uploaded this footage to social media. It has used AI targeting systems like "Habsora" (The Gospel) to approve targets in seconds, with minimal human oversight. Whole families have been eliminated under suspicion of housing a single fighter.

Aid drops have become theatre. Starving civilians rush trucks. Drones hover overhead. Soldiers open fire. Bodies fall. International journalists review satellite images. Western officials say more aid is needed. The cycle repeats.

5. Children as Casualties and Instruments

5.1 Tribute Logic

In *The Hunger Games*, children are selected to die. Not adults. Not soldiers. Children. This selection is deliberate. It reinforces fear. It breaks families. It keeps resistance weak.

In Gaza, children are the primary victims. As of June 2025, over 14,500 children have been killed. Tens of thousands injured. Thousands more orphaned. UNICEF and UNRWA officials have repeatedly confirmed the scale of the toll.

Hospitals report performing surgeries without anaesthetic on children. Malnourishment has created an entire generation of children stunted in growth and development.

Newborns die from dehydration. Infants are found trying to breastfeed from the bodies of their dead mothers.

This is not an incidental outcome. It is a structural result. The siege prevents food, medicine, fuel, water. Children die because the system is built that way.

7. Propaganda and Narrative Control

7.1 Media Isolation

In *The Hunger Games*, the Capitol controls the story. It edits footage. It censors rebellion. It isolates districts from one another to prevent unity. It spreads fear through media.

In Gaza, Israel controls internet access, telecommunications, and border entry for journalists. Internet blackouts are common. Foreign journalists are largely excluded from entering. Palestinian journalists are killed at unprecedented rates — over 140 as of mid-2025. Western media relies heavily on Israeli military sources and footage.

Narratives are controlled. Gaza's civilians are labelled as "human shields." Hospitals are called "terror infrastructure." Mass graves are explained away. Obvious war crimes are obscured with "context."

Western audiences are not shown full footage. They are not told the scale. They are not told the mechanisms. Only fragments.

8. Commodification of Violence

8.1 Spectacle Economics

In *The Hunger Games*, the Games make money. The deaths generate profit through betting, sponsorship, and surveillance tech.

Gaza has become a testing ground. Israeli arms companies promote their technology as "battle-proven." Surveillance tech tested in Gaza is exported globally. Border walls, AI weapons, facial recognition systems — all field-tested on a captive population.

Western companies, including those in the UK and US, invest in military-industrial tools developed from the Gaza laboratory. Gaza's deaths generate military innovation. That innovation generates profit.

This is not abstract. It is budgeted, patented, and sold.

9. False Peace and Total Control

9.1 Ceasefire as Reset

In *The Hunger Games*, peace is temporary and strategic. It resets the system. It doesn't reform it. It doesn't liberate the districts.

In Gaza, ceasefires are used to reorganise. Buildings are not rebuilt. People are not compensated. The siege never lifts. The blockade continues. Surveillance expands. Food and fuel are restricted again. Foreign attention fades. Then the next bombardment begins.

Peace is tactical, not structural. It changes nothing about the conditions of enclosure, deprivation, and control.

10. Final Observations

This is not a fictional comparison. The methods used in *The Hunger Games* to illustrate dystopia are all observable in Gaza:

- Enclosure
- Surveillance
- Controlled starvation

- Targeting of civilians
- Suppression of media
- Weaponised aid
- Profit from war

None of these are speculation. They are documented by UN bodies, human rights organisations, medical groups, satellite imagery, eyewitness testimony, and the Israeli government's own statements.

The use of *The Hunger Games* as a frame is not metaphor. It is diagnosis.

If *The Hunger Games* was written to warn, Gaza proves the warning was insufficient.

6. Gaza as District 13

6.1 Destroyed but Alive

District 13 in *The Hunger Games* was believed to be destroyed. In reality, it survived underground. It built its own system. It launched a resistance. It became the heart of rebellion.

Gaza has been targeted for annihilation repeatedly: in 2008–9, in 2014, in 2021, and now since October 2023. Entire neighbourhoods have been erased. Schools, mosques, libraries, media offices destroyed. Yet life continues. Resistance continues. Cultural production continues. Artists, journalists, teachers, parents — all continue to record, survive, resist.

Israel has declared its aim is to eliminate Hamas. But its actions have displaced 1.9 million people, destroyed over 70% of all buildings, and targeted nearly every hospital in Gaza. This is not a military campaign. This is erasure.

District 13 survived because its people refused to disappear. Gaza follows the same path.