

Israel plans to demolish all buildings in “buffer zone” in Gaza

Andre Damon
24 January 2024

The New York Times reported Tuesday that Israel intends to fully demolish all buildings in a 1,000-meter “buffer zone” along Gaza’s border with Israel, citing Israeli officials.

The move, which is a war crime under international law, would significantly reduce the size of the Gaza Strip.

The plan came to light after 24 Israeli soldiers were killed Monday as they were laying explosives in a building in the area to be demolished. As the soldiers were laying the explosives, they were attacked by Hamas fighters, leading the explosives to go off during the firefight.

The *Times* reported that “Israel wants to demolish many of the Palestinian buildings close to the border in order to create what they describe as a ‘security zone,’ according to the three officials.”

The *Times* also reported that “Two of the officials said that Israel’s goal was to create a buffer of up to roughly six-tenths of a mile along the entire length of Israel’s roughly 36-mile border with Gaza. At its narrowest point, the territory is less than four miles wide.”

In a news conference, Israeli military spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari said that Israel was seeking to “create the security conditions for the return of the residents of the south to their homes.”

The vast majority of Gaza’s buildings have been damaged or destroyed since Israel launched its assault on Gaza, which has killed more than 25,000 Gazans and left over 7,000 missing.

Asked to comment on the plan, United Nations special rapporteur on the right to adequate housing Balakrishnan Rajagopal told the *Times* that “There is simply no provision in the Geneva Conventions for what Israel is doing along the border, which is kind of a

preemptive clearing of property.”

He continued, “Israel, as the occupying power, has an obligation not to engage in what’s called wanton destruction of property.”

Israeli politicians have previously hinted at a plan for such a buffer zone, with former Israeli foreign minister Eli Cohen declaring, “The territory of Gaza will also decrease,” and former agriculture minister Avi Dichter speaking of a “margin” along the border. “No matter who you are, you will never be able to come close to the Israeli border,” he said.

The revelation of Israel’s plan to reduce the territory of the Gaza Strip came amid warnings by the United Nations that half a million residents of the Gaza Strip face “catastrophic hunger.” Juliette Touma, UNRWA director of communications, said, “These are not conditions for human beings.”

The UN noted that “25,000 civilians have been killed, of whom 70 percent were women and children.” It also noted that “1.7 million are displaced,” and “health facilities are decimated.”

Gaza’s Ministry of Health said that 195 Palestinians had been killed between January 22 and 23, and that 354 had been injured.

As US President Joe Biden was giving a speech in Manassas, Virginia on Tuesday, he was interrupted by demonstrators who called him “Genocide Joe.” One of the demonstrators shouted, “Stop funding genocide. Ceasefire now.”

In a statement published Tuesday, the Euro-Med Monitor accused Israel of continuously attacking and killing residents of Gaza as they await aid trucks. “While famine spreads in the north of the Gaza Strip, the Israeli army continues to kill Palestinians who are waiting to receive aid south of Gaza City,” the Monitor said, “confirming Israel’s intention to carry out

genocide against the Strip’s civilian population since October 7, 2023.”

The Euro-Med Monitor further stated:

The human rights group documented the Israeli army’s use of artillery shells against hundreds of starving civilians who gathered on Salah al-Din Road near the Kuwait roundabout, southeast of Gaza City, to wait for UN trucks carrying limited aid supplies, killing and injuring a number of them. The Israeli army used artillery shells, live ammunition, and quadcopter drones to attack hundreds of starving civilians who had gathered in the hopes of receiving the meager aid, as reported by Euro-Med Monitor field teams.

It added:

Israel has not only used starvation as a tool of war against Palestinians in the northern Gaza Valley for more than three consecutive months now, but has targeted Gazans trying to secure some of the limited aid supplies that began arriving about 10 days ago—killing and injuring many of them as part of its genocidal war against civilians in the Strip.

On Monday, the United Nations reported that “Israeli forces reportedly raided Al Kheir Hospital in western Khan Younis, ordering women and children to evacuate towards Rafah, southern Gaza, and reportedly arresting medical staff. The World Health Organization expressed its concern that the facility was facing military incursions and that several health workers had been detained. Communication with the hospital is no longer possible.”

The UN also noted that “due to evacuation orders in neighborhoods surrounding Nasser Hospital and continuous hostilities in the vicinity of the hospital, the Ministry of Health reports that large numbers of wounded people are situated on the hospital grounds.”

As Israel’s genocide continues, the United States

escalates its direct military involvement in a spiraling war throughout the Middle East. On Monday, the US and UK carried out airstrikes against eight sites in Yemen, allegedly targeting radar, drones and missile sites.

The same day, the US Defense Department released the names of two Navy SEALs who were killed during a commando raid in the Arabian Sea off the coast of Somalia.

On Tuesday, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin said that the United States carried out airstrikes against “Iran-affiliated groups in Iraq.” Austin said, “The President and I will not hesitate to take necessary action to defend them and our interests,” adding, “We are fully prepared to take further measures to protect our people and our facilities.”



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact