

# White House endorses Israel's deliberate starvation policy in Gaza

Andre Damon  
13 November 2024

The US State Department determined Tuesday that Israel is not violating international human rights law by withholding food to Gaza, effectively endorsing Israel's policy of deliberately seeking to exterminate the population of Gaza through starvation.

Multiple US laws, including Section 502B and 620I of the Foreign Assistance Act and the "Leahy Law," prohibit the government from arming militaries that the State Department deems to be committing "gross violations of human rights." A National Security Memorandum, dubbed NSM-20, issued by the Biden administration declared that "the United States must maintain an appropriate understanding of foreign partners' adherence to international law."

On October 13, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin sent a letter to the Israeli government warning that unless Israel massively increased the provision of food to Gaza, "these measures may have implications for US policy under NSM-20," implying that Israel was in danger of being deemed as having violated human rights law and would not receive further military aid.

The letter demanded that Israel enable "a minimum of 350 trucks per day to enter Gaza." As of Tuesday, only 400 trucks had entered the territory for the entire month, meaning that the amount of food allowed into Gaza is just one-tenth of that officially demanded by the US.

Pressed by reporters, State Department spokesman Vedant Patel declared, "We have not made an assessment that the Israelis are in violation of US law" and by implication international law.

Under conditions in which Israeli officials have made clear that they are implementing a deliberate policy of starvation as a method of war and collective punishment, this assessment constitutes an open

embrace by the US government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's mass starvation policy.

The letter by Blinken and Austin was intended as a diplomatic smokescreen, aimed at obscuring the fact that the United States had in fact endorsed Israel's policy of deliberate starvation of the population of Gaza. But in issuing their ultimatum, the US officials created the circumstances for what happened today: the explicit and public endorsement by the US government of mass starvation as a weapon of war.

On October 12, CNN reported that the Netanyahu government had adopted a "version of" the so-called "Generals' Plan" proposed by retired IDF General Giora Eiland, which calls for completely cutting off all food to northern Gaza and treating all civilians there as enemy combatants, subject to killing by Israeli forces. CNN reported:

A former senior military official who is aware of the Israeli government and security leadership's thinking—though not directly involved in decision-making—told CNN that the cabinet had adopted "a version of" Eiland's proposal, which has come to be known as "The Generals' Plan." Eiland told CNN the claim was "quite true."

On November 5, IDF Brigadier General Itzik Cohen told reporters that the IDF would not allow food to enter northern Gaza because there are "no more civilians left."

In reality, between 50,000 and 75,000 people are estimated to remain in northern Gaza, according to the United Nations. These civilians, officially designated

enemy combatants by the Israeli government, are being subjected to deliberate and explicit starvation and mass killing.

The declaration by the State Department that Israel is not committing human rights violations by its deliberate mass starvation policy in fact makes official the contents of a private discussion between Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Netanyahu on October 22.

The *Washington Post* reported:

US officials told Netanyahu there is a “perception” that Israel is pursuing a strategy of “isolating the north, telling people that if they don’t leave they’re effectively targets and denying food to go in,” said the official.

In response to this blunt declaration, Blinken issued a communique declaring the United States’ blanket support for Israel: “The Secretary reaffirmed the United States’ ironclad commitment to Israel’s security” and pledged to continue “ongoing efforts by the United States and its partners” to support Israel.

As a result of Israel’s mass starvation policy, the humanitarian situation in Gaza is catastrophic. According to the US’s self-imposed deadline to assess Israel’s compliance with international humanitarian law, a group of international human rights organizations issued a statement declaring:

That situation is in an even more dire state today than a month ago. The principals of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee now assess that “the entire Palestinian population in North Gaza is at imminent risk of dying from disease, famine and violence.” The findings of this scorecard underscore Israel’s failure to comply with US demands and international obligations. Israel should be held accountable for the end result of failing to ensure the adequate provision of food, medical, and other supplies to reach people in need.

This deliberate policy of mass starvation is

accompanied by continuous Israeli attacks on Palestinian civilians in Gaza. In its latest update, the UN Human Rights Office reported:

Between the afternoons of 5 and 12 November, according to the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Gaza, 274 Palestinians were killed and 729 were injured. Between 7 October 2023 and 12 November 2024, at least 43,665 Palestinians were killed and 103,076 were injured.

The open embrace by the Biden administration of Israel’s mass starvation policy has far-reaching implications. The world’s leading self-proclaimed “democracies” are openly embracing the deliberate starvation of civilian populations as a method of war, setting a precedent not only for the waging of future wars, but also for domestic repression against internal political opposition among broad sections of their own populations.



To contact the WSWWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**