

Trump's UN ambassador pick says Israel has "biblical right" to West Bank

## White House signals new phase in ethnic cleansing of Palestine

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In a series of public statements, executive orders and background comments to the press, the Trump administration is making clear that it is moving toward the next phase of the US-Israeli ethnic cleansing of Palestine through the expulsion of the population of Gaza and the annexation of the West Bank by Israel.

While Biden funded, armed and politically defended Israel's genocide in Gaza, which has killed at least 70,000 people, his administration upheld the fiction that it was seeking a "two-state solution" and a homeland for the Palestinian people. But the incoming Trump administration is publicly extending US support to the actual policy of the Netanyahu government, which is the ethnic cleansing and annexation of the entire territory of Palestine.

In congressional testimony on Tuesday, Elise Stefanik, President Trump's nominee to be the ambassador to the United Nations, declared that Israel has a "biblical right" to the entire West Bank, signaling the administration's support for the public positions of Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and former National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir.

Stefanik's comments followed a statement by a Trump administration official to NBC News on Sunday that the White House is discussing the "voluntary" relocation (i.e., forcible ethnic cleansing) of the Palestinian people from Gaza to the Pacific archipelago of Indonesia.

In a buried lead designed to normalize the administration's plans for the war crime of ethnically cleansing Gaza, NBC News wrote:

The question of how to rebuild Gaza remains, as well as where some 2 million Palestinians can be relocated in the meantime. Indonesia, for instance, is among the locations under discussion for where some of them could go, the transition official said. Even the question of whether Gazans would be willing to relocate is up in the air. The idea of relocation is deeply controversial among Palestinians and fellow Arabs. Many believe that relocating would be the first step in Israel forcing them off their land.

By "many," NBC is referring to international law, which under the Rome Statute, the treaty governing the International Criminal Court, asserts that the forcible transfer of a population is a war crime and a crime against humanity.

Smotrich and Ben-Gvir have repeatedly called for the ethnic cleansing of Gaza, always presenting it as "voluntary."

"We want to encourage willful emigration, and we need to find countries willing to take them [the Palestinians] in," Smotrich told Israel's Channel 12 last year. "We cannot withdraw from any territory we are in in the Gaza Strip. Not only do I not rule out Jewish settlement there, I believe it is also an important thing," Smotrich added.

Ben-Gvir told reporters last year that the war in Gaza presents an "opportunity to concentrate on encouraging the migration of the residents of Gaza," calling the

move “a correct, just, moral and humane solution.”

The Trump administration backed up its statements of support for the ethnic cleansing of Palestine with the signing of an executive order rescinding US sanctions enacted by the Biden administration on illegal Israeli settlers on the West Bank. Those sanctions were meant to create the illusion that the United States did not support Israeli efforts to seize the West Bank and drive the Palestinians living there from their homes. With Trump’s return to office, this fiction is being dispensed with.

Having been given air cover by the incoming administration, the Israeli military and settlers have launched a rampage throughout the West Bank.

For days on end, Israeli settlers have been rioting throughout the West Bank, injuring dozens of people and burning homes and cars.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) launched a raid on the city of Jenin in the West Bank on Tuesday, killing at least 10 Palestinians. In a statement on Tuesday, the anti-occupation Israeli veterans group Breaking the Silence said: “After multiple straight days of allowing settlers to torch villages throughout the West Bank, the IDF has now announced another all-out ‘Operation’ in Jenin,” adding that the city is being “Gazafied,” including “airstrikes and destruction of infrastructure.”

Al Jazeera reported, “The Israeli military ... is conducting a wide-scale, large military operation in Jenin and its refugee camp; bulldozers were seen in the daylight entering the camp and tearing up the roads leading up to it.”

It added:

Whenever there is an Israeli raid anywhere in the occupied West Bank, they tear up the roads, they destroy the infrastructure along the way, and in this case, they were shooting people leading up to the camp, and that’s why we’re seeing so many gunshot injuries. The army is also preventing medical vehicles, like ambulances, from reaching those who are wounded.

Earlier this month, a study by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, published in *The*

*Lancet*, said that the death toll from Israeli bullets and bombs “probably exceeded 70,000.” An earlier study from *The Lancet* suggested that the all-cause mortality from the genocide, including from malnutrition and disease, could be 186,000 or more.

In December, Amnesty International published an exhaustive, 296-page report proving that “only an intent to destroy the Palestinians in Gaza” can “explain the scale and scope” of the mass murder, forcible displacement and deliberate starvation of the Palestinians in Gaza by Israel.

In November 2024, the International Criminal Court formally issued warrants for the arrest of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant for war crimes and crimes against humanity.



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