

Israel plans second genocide in Gaza, steps up ethnic cleansing in West Bank

Jean Shaoul

26 February 2025

Israel's deputy parliament speaker Nissim Vaturi has called for a renewed genocide in Gaza, separating children from their mothers and then slaughtering all adults, whom he describes as "subhumans."

On *Kol BaRama*, the Likud MK (Member of Knesset) declared that no one, civilians included, was "innocent in Gaza... They are outcasts and no one in the world wants them."

Israel needs to "separate the children and women and kill the adults in Gaza, we are being too considerate," he declared. Released Palestinian prisoners should be sent to the West Bank city of Jenin "so they can be eliminated later... Erase Jenin."

These are not just the ravings of one vile fascist. They are the policy already being actioned by Benjamin Netanyahu's ruling Likud coalition, which has announced its intention to expel the Palestinians from Gaza with the backing of the Trump administration in the US and has mounted a five-week-long Operation Iron Wall against refugee camps in Jenin and elsewhere in the West Bank, which has already driven 40,000 into internal exile.

The operation follows the Gaza playbook point for point. Hundreds of buildings and infrastructure have been systematically levelled in Jenin, Tulkarem, Tubas and the surrounding areas in the largest Israeli offensive against the West Bank since the assault on Jenin in 2002.

Just two days after Israel agreed the ceasefire deal in Gaza, the security cabinet added the West Bank into its war goals and called to "[strengthen] defence and security in Judea and Samaria [the biblical names of the West Bank], with an emphasis on maintaining the security of movement and settlements." This followed repeated calls from the fascist members of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government, their supporters in the media and settler leaders to "transfer the war to the West Bank."

On Sunday, Defence Minister Israel Katz declared the Israel Defense Forces' (IDF) offensive across the West

Bank was expanding and the military would remain in the refugee camps "for the coming year."

The IDF has deployed tanks in the West Bank, the first time in more than 20 years. It has utilised the same tactics employed in Gaza, including air power and advanced weaponry, ground raids using special forces and detonations and armoured bulldozers to "clear" Palestinian cities of what it calls terrorist infrastructure. It has killed at least 70 people, including 10 children, a pregnant woman and an elderly man, since the start of the year. In Jenin alone, 38 have been killed.

As in Gaza, the IDF has targeted four healthcare facilities. According to the Jenin refugee camp's Media Committee, the Israeli military has destroyed 470 structures, conducted 153 home raids and launched 14 airstrikes. The IDF was continuing to close the water supply to 35 percent of Jenin city, including the refugee camp and four hospitals. Twenty thousand of Jenin refugee camp's population and three-quarters of Tulkarm refugee camp's population have been displaced.

This makes it impossible for the 40,000 Palestinians who have been driven out to return to their homes, especially as the demolition of houses is accompanied by the construction of roads in their place, severing the camps from one end to the other in multiple directions.

The IDF has imposed 900 checkpoints and barriers, cutting the West Bank into 300 separated areas, making movement all but impossible.

The Israeli daily *Haaretz* revealed that the military has issued new orders authorising the shooting of anyone suspected of planting an explosive device as well as firing at vehicles coming toward a checkpoint from a combat zone.

Anything is now allowed, with soldiers going on the rampage, instigating a reign of terror. Officers and reservists from colonel on down now have their faces covered and their names will not be used in media

interviews to prevent their arrest if they travel abroad.

Israel's offensive in the West Bank is part of broader plans to expand Zionist settlements and eventually annex the West Bank—first expelling the Palestinians from Area C, assigned by the 1993 Oslo Accords to Israel's full military control and making up 60 percent of the Palestinian territory.

The Badil Center for Refugee Rights, based in Bethlehem, said that Israel's aim was to "dismantle the refugee camps" in the West Bank and "normalize Israeli presence" by "establishing a new status quo in the West Bank through invasions and raids that include extensive destruction and wilful killing" — with the purpose of "accelerat[ing] full Israeli colonial domination."

The IDF's focus on the demolition of the refugee camps accompanies Netanyahu's efforts to dismantle the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which provides vital welfare, health and education services to around five million registered Palestinian refugees in the Palestinian territories, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. As of the end of last month, Israel's ban on UNRWA operations in areas under its control means that the UN agency is unable to operate in Israel/Palestine. The destruction of the camps serves, in Israel's eyes, to remove UNRWA's *raison d'être*.

This has paved the way for Israel's latest assault on all human rights organisations working in Israel/Palestine. The Knesset has tabled legislation seeking to remove judicial protection and tax-exempt status from Israeli human rights groups funded by foreign governments. The requirement for the 200 or so NGOs to pay tax equivalent to 80 percent of their overseas donations will deter all foreign donors.

This will further serve to cut off aid to groups supporting the Palestinians and make annexation easier. As B'tselem, the Israeli human rights group, explained, "The goal of the law is to destroy human rights organizations by crippling our financial sources."

Operation Iron Wall in the West Bank is Netanyahu's quid pro quo to Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich's Religious Zionism Party and other ultra-nationalist and religious parties for remaining in his coalition and thus, to some degree, protecting him in his ongoing trial for corruption.

In addition to his finance portfolio, Smotrich also oversees all civilian affairs in the West Bank. He is determined to secure the annexation of both the West Bank and Gaza, for which an end to the Gaza ceasefire and an all-out war to expel the Palestinians in all the

territories illegally occupied by Israel since the 1967 Arab-Israeli war is demanded. He fully expects that the Trump administration will support his expansionist project.

Following the ceasefire deal that included the release of hundreds of Palestinians held without trial or charge in Israeli jails, Defence Minister Katz freed all West Bank settlers held under administrative detention. He said this was "to convey a clear message of strengthening and encouraging the settlements, which are at the forefront of the struggle against Palestinian terrorism and face growing security challenges."

Vigilante groups have escalated their terror campaign of attacks on farming and pastoral communities in the West Bank. In January alone, Israeli settlers carried out 375 attacks on Palestinian communities that included armed attacks, land grabs, physical aggressions and destruction of crops and property, according to the Palestinian Authority's Palestinian Wall and Settlements Resistance Commission that monitors Israeli settlement and land grabbing activity.

On Tuesday, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society said its medical staff had transferred a 20-year-old disabled man to a hospital in the northern city of Tubas after he was stabbed in the abdomen by illegal settlers.

President Mahmoud Abbas and the Palestinian Authority have taken no action whatsoever to oppose Israel's military offensive. Just weeks before the Israeli assault, the PA carried out its own 52-day-long security operation against Jenin refugee camp and the other camps, stopping journalists from covering the events, using the same pretext as Israel of eradicating Islamist terrorists and militias.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:
wsws.org/contact