

Israel's Defence Minister vows to annex parts of Gaza as all-out aid blockade and military offensive continue

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Defence Minister Israel Katz issued a statement Friday committing the Zionist regime to annex parts of Gaza if Hamas refuses to release the remaining hostages under its control. Israel continued its all-out onslaught on the enclave for a fifth straight day, with a brutal blockade on all aid launched at the beginning of March still in force.

"The more Hamas persists in its refusal to release the hostages, the more territory it will lose, which will be annexed to Israel," Katz declared. "If the hostages are not released, Israel will continue to take more and more territory in the Strip for permanent control."

Referring to US President Donald Trump's plan to expel Gaza's Palestinian population and turn the enclave into a "riviera of the Middle East," Katz continued that Israel would intensify its military operations. Israel will deploy "all military and civilian pressure, including evacuation of the Gaza population south and implementing US President Trump's voluntary migration plan for Gaza residents."

The description of Trump's plan for Gaza as consisting of "voluntary migration" for the Palestinians stretches the term Orwellian to its limits. Since returning to the White House, the fascist-minded president has repeatedly made clear his support for ethnic cleansing and the elimination of the Palestinian population from the enclave. In late January, Trump urged Israel to "clean out" the Arab population from the Gaza Strip.

At a joint appearance with Netanyahu at the White House February 4, Trump then openly embraced the expulsion of the Palestinians, declaring that Gaza "should not go through a process of rebuilding and occupation by the same people that...lived a miserable

existence there." Trump urged "other countries" to "build various domains that will ultimately be occupied by the 1.8 million Palestinians living in Gaza." He concluded by suggesting that the US would annex Gaza.

US State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce was repeatedly asked Friday to comment on Katz's threat to begin annexing Gaza, but refused to answer directly. Underlining the Trump administration's approval for Katz's proposal, Bruce responded by saying that the present situation has "one cause, Hamas."

After using a six-week ceasefire in Gaza to regroup and rearm, the far-right Israeli regime was emboldened by Trump's outspoken support for forcibly removing the Palestinians to impose a full blockade on food and aid entering the enclave at the beginning of the month. Sam Rose, director of planning for the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA), said in Geneva Friday, "This is the longest period since the start of conflict in October 2023 that no supplies whatsoever have entered Gaza. The progress we made as an aid system over the last six weeks of the ceasefire is being reversed." The UN says it only has flour supplies in Gaza to last six days.

Since relaunching air attacks early on Tuesday, followed by a renewed ground offensive, the Zionist regime has made clear with its actions that it aims to implement Trump's order that Gaza "should not go through a process of rebuilding and occupation by the same people that...lived a miserable existence there." The Israel Defence Force destroyed the Turkish Palestinian Friendship Hospital Friday, the only health care facility in the enclave that could provide cancer

care. Prior to the beginning of Israel's genocidal onslaught in October 2023, the hospital, which was built in 2017 with aid of \$37 million from Turkey, provided treatment to some 10,000 patients. The IDF's strike that destroyed the complex also flattened a nearby medical school. In a separate air raid, the IDF targeted the medical faculty of the Islamic University in Gaza City.

Human Rights Watch published a report Thursday accusing Israel of war crimes while its soldiers occupied hospitals in Gaza at various times over the past 18 months. The aid organisation noted that Israeli soldiers were responsible for the "deaths and unnecessary suffering of Palestinian patients" while they were present in medical facilities. "The Israeli military's denial of water and electricity left sick and wounded people to die, while soldiers mistreated and forcibly displaced patients and health workers, and damaged and destroyed hospitals," the report stated.

In a post on X Friday, the World Health Organisation noted that 500,000 women across Gaza lack access to essential reproductive and maternal care services, while over 500 cases of acute malnutrition have been reported in children between the ages of six months and five years since the beginning of 2025.

Discussions are clearly far advanced behind the scenes on where forcibly displaced Palestinians could be sent. Egypt felt compelled to issue a strongly worded denial Friday after a report appeared in a Lebanese newspaper that the butcher of Cairo Abdel Fattah El-Sisi made a proposal at recent meetings of Arab leaders in Saudi Arabia and Qatar to accept half a million Palestinians into northern Sinai. Last week, it was revealed that the US and Israel have begun talks with Sudan and Somalia to investigate the possibility of deporting Palestinians to the two impoverished and war-torn countries in eastern Africa. The proposal is redolent of the Nazis' Madagascar Plan, according to which Jews were to be sent to the French colony. The plan never came to fruition because the Nazis pursued instead the physical extermination of 6 million European Jews.

Israel has already massacred at least 70,000 Palestinians since the genocide began in October 2023, and estimates suggest that many more have died. Netanyahu's far-right regime feels it can get away with mass murder and annexation because it enjoys

unconditional support from the imperialist powers, first and foremost the United States. Washington, both under the Democrat Biden and the fascist Republican Trump, has viewed the genocide against the Palestinians as a key component of a broader regional war to secure American hegemony in the Middle East by carrying out regime change in Iran and weakening its regional allies. It is in this context no mere coincidence that the return to Israel's unrestrained military offensive on Gaza takes place as the US has launched since Sunday a series of devastating attacks on Yemen, whose Houthi fighters Trump has pledged to "annihilate."

For its part, the Zionist regime under Netanyahu's leadership is pursuing a policy of "Greater Israel" that seeks the redrawing of the region's borders with American imperialism's approval. Israeli forces continue to launch extensive military operations in the West Bank to intimidate and displace Palestinians from their land.

Israel's air force launched Friday what were described as "extensive" air strikes on military targets in Syria, including at the Palmyra military airport and nearby T-4 military base. The Israeli military claimed the strikes were necessary to take out "military strategic capabilities." Since the toppling of the Assad regime by US-backed Islamist fighters linked to al-Qaeda in December, Israel has launched hundreds of air strikes to dismantle Syria's military infrastructure and ordered troops to advance into Syrian territory from their positions on the occupied Golan Heights.

The close interconnection between the Gaza genocide and American imperialism's broader war to control the energy-rich Middle East underscores that all of those around the world opposed to Israel's barbarism must link their struggle to end the genocide with the fight against imperialist war. The only social force capable of leading this movement is the international working class, which is bearing the full burden of militarism and war through attacks on jobs and its living standards, and the gutting of its democratic and social rights.



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