

Israel establishes government bureau to oversee Gaza ethnic cleansing, as death toll tops 50,000

Andre Damon
23 March 2025

Israel's security cabinet has formally voted for the establishment of an office to oversee the ethnic cleansing of Gaza, Defense Minister Israel Katz reported on Sunday.

The office will be the "Voluntary Emigration Bureau for Gaza residents interested in relocating to third countries," Katz claimed.

In reality, there is nothing "voluntary" about the program the Netanyahu government is implementing. The population of Gaza is to be forced out of their ancestral homeland through deliberate mass starvation and mass killings by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

Katz said the office would enable

passage of Gaza residents for their voluntary departure to third countries, including securing their movement, establishing movement routes, checking pedestrians at designated crossings in the Gaza Strip, as well as coordinating the provision of infrastructure that will enable passage by land, sea and air to the destination countries.

Earlier this year, US President Donald Trump called for the displacement of the Palestinian people from Gaza and called for its annexation by the United States, saying, "The US will take over the Gaza Strip. ... We'll own it." Trump added the US will "level it out."

Katz reiterated the Israeli government's support for Trump's proposal, declaring, "We are working with all means to implement the US president's vision."

The US-Israeli plan is a flagrant violation of the prohibition under the Fourth Geneva Convention of the forcible transfer of civilians during armed conflicts.

The US and Israel are engaged in a campaign to pressure countries throughout the Middle East and Africa to accept the Palestinians once they are forcibly displaced from Gaza. At the Israeli security meeting that set up the new office, cabinet members said the US is still working to find countries to accept the displaced Palestinians.

The *Jerusalem Post* reported:

US President Donald Trump's administration was searching for countries willing to absorb and resettle Palestinians from Gaza, Israeli ministers were told during a cabinet meeting held on Saturday.

Last week, the *Times of Israel* reported that "Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi has informed other Arab leaders that he is willing to temporarily relocate half a million residents from Gaza to northern Sinai in a designated city as part of the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip," citing a Lebanese newspaper. But over the weekend, the Egyptian Bureau of Information claimed that the report was false and that Egypt would not accept the Palestinians "due to a risk to national security."

Earlier, the Associated Press reported that the United States and Israel had engaged in discussions with officials from Sudan and Somalia about transferring the Palestinians there, echoing Nazi Germany's "Madagascar Plan" that preceded the mass extermination of Europe's Jews.

The formation of the new office to oversee the ethnic cleansing of Gaza came as the official death toll in the Gaza genocide hit 50,000, according to Gaza's Ministry of Health.

This is about 2.1 percent of the pre-war population of 2.3 million, or approximately one in every 45 people.

The Health Ministry said that over 113,000 Palestinians in Gaza had been injured since the start of the genocide.

Even these horrific figures are likely a significant undercount. In January, *The Lancet* medical journal published an article estimating that the Health Ministry's figures underestimate the true death toll by 41 percent. That would mean that the actual death toll is over 70,000.

In November, the Human Rights Office of the United Nations published an analysis estimating that 70 percent of people killed by Israeli bombardments in Gaza over a six-month period were women and children.

On Sunday, the Ministry of Health reported that 39 people had been killed over the past 24 hours, bringing the death toll to 673 since Israel launched a massive bombardment of Gaza on Tuesday.

Israel has also announced that it is expanding its ground invasion of Gaza. Over the weekend, the Israeli military ordered the evacuation of part of the southern city of Rafah, indicating that it would soon begin ground operations there. This was in addition to evacuations throughout northern Gaza. Two months ago, people returned to their shattered homes and neighborhoods following the announcement of a "ceasefire," which has since been completely broken by Israel.

Rosalia Bollen, a communications specialist from UNICEF, told *Al Jazeera*:

Before the two ground invasions that started today—a ground invasion in Tal as-Sultan in Rafah, and a ground invasion in Beit Hanoon in northern Gaza—there were estimates of already 125,000 people on the move, forced to flee again, because of the violence and the displacement orders of the previous days.

Today's ground invasions are making this situation even worse. ... Despite the evacuation orders indicating safe passage, there are reports of people being killed, people being injured, people being trapped—there are reports of ambulances being trapped with medics killed and injured.

200 children killed. ... Hundreds more injured, including with very severe injuries, with burns over their bodies, with shrapnel lodged inside their bodies, with fractures; children who've lost limbs, and children who've lost their parents and their siblings. ... We're absolutely terrified about what might happen over the coming hours and days.

On Sunday, Israel carried out a strike on Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis that killed a senior Hamas political leader alongside women and children. Salah Bardawil, a member of Hamas's political bureau, was killed in an airstrike along with his wife. Bardawil was being treated at the hospital after being wounded in an airstrike. Attacks on hospitals, as well as the assassination of political leaders, are war crimes proscribed under international law. The bombing put the hospital's surgery department completely out of service.

Meanwhile, the US-Israeli military offensive continues throughout the Middle East. The US continued its near-daily airstrikes on Yemen over the weekend, killing one person. Since last week, 50 people have been killed by US airstrikes in Yemen. An Israeli airstrike in southern Lebanon killed eight people.

For more than two weeks, Israel has completely blockaded the entry of food, water, and medical supplies into Gaza, leading to rising malnutrition and hunger.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact

Bollen continued:

We've seen over the past couple of days over