

# Israeli national security minister pledges to bomb food depots as Gaza blockade reaches 50th day

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23 April 2025

On Tuesday, Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir attended a meeting with leading members of Congress at Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago club in Palm Beach, Florida, where he pledged to bomb food and aid distribution centers in Gaza, claiming his proposals met with support on the part of the lawmakers.

"I had the honor and privilege of meeting with senior Republican Party officials at Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate," Ben-Gvir said in a post on X. "They expressed support for my very clear position on how to act in Gaza and that the food and aid depots should be bombed in order to create military and political pressure to bring our hostages home safely."

Ben-Gvir was expressing the actual policy of the Israeli government, which aims to ethnically cleanse the Palestinian population from Gaza through deliberate starvation.

On Tuesday, the total Israeli blockade of all food, water, electricity, and medical supplies into Gaza reached its 50th day.

In a statement, the UN relief coordination office said this is now the longest period without any supplies entering the Gaza strip since the start of Israel's onslaught in October 2023.

"Right now, it is probably the worst humanitarian situation ever seen throughout the war in Gaza," UN spokesperson Jens Laerke said Tuesday, noting that the entire population of Gaza is facing acute shortages of food, medicine, fuel and clean water.

"Hunger is spreading and deepening—deliberate and man-made," UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini said in a statement Tuesday. "Gaza has become a land of desperation... humanitarian aid is being used as a bargaining chip and a weapon of war."

Gaza's bakeries have been forced to shut down, and the entire health system is collapsing amid a lack of medical supplies. "Two million people—a majority of women and children—are undergoing collective punishment," Lazzarini said.

Last week, the Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor published a damning account of Gaza teetering on the brink of famine:

Euro-Med Monitor's field team in the Gaza Strip has observed alarming indicators pointing to a severe food crisis that may soon reach the level of famine. The ongoing Israeli blockade has caused a severe and persistent shortage of essential food items necessary for survival, including grains, proteins, and fats. Much of the enclave's remaining agricultural and food infrastructure has either been bombed or otherwise destroyed, and/or is currently under Israeli military control. As a result, people have been forced to sell their most basic belongings just to secure food, signaling the onset of a breakdown in their ability to endure the hunger.

Families in the Gaza Strip have been forced to cut the number of their daily meals, resulting in noticeable weight loss among residents. In the near-total absence of fresh and nutritious food, most people now rely almost entirely on the enclave's limited supply of canned goods, while many others have become fully dependent on food banks for their daily meals. However, these food banks have come under intensified Israeli military attacks in recent weeks, further

depriving residents of access to even the most basic food necessities.

On April 17, a group of humanitarian organizations including Oxfam and Save the Children published a statement warning that the “humanitarian aid system in Gaza is facing total collapse.”

The statement declared that “This is one of the worst humanitarian failures of our generation. Every single person in Gaza is relying on humanitarian aid to survive. That lifeline has been completely cut off since a blockade on all aid supplies was imposed by Israeli authorities on 2 March.”

The statement noted that “More than 400 aid workers and over 1,300 health workers have been reported killed in Gaza since October 2023, despite the requirement under international humanitarian law for humanitarian workers to be protected.”

The statements by Ben-Gvir make clear that the Israeli military’s attack on humanitarian organizations is a deliberate policy, aimed at provoking famine throughout the region.

Ben-Gvir’s trip to Mar-A-Lago is part of a tour throughout the United States, involving a visit to Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut on Wednesday. Ben-Gvir’s office said that among the congressmen in attendance was Republican Congressman Tom Emmer, the third-highest-ranking member of the US House of Representatives.

On Wednesday, Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz reiterated the position of the Netanyahu government that “no humanitarian aid will enter Gaza.”

The visit by Ben-Gvir follows by two weeks the trip by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to meet with US President Donald Trump at the White House, where Netanyahu declared that the Israeli government is “working on” Trump’s pledge to ethnically cleanse Gaza.

This plan is being implemented through the deliberate starvation of the Palestinian population, the daily bombardment and mass killing of the civilian population, and the active preparations for the full, permanent, military occupation of the Gaza Strip and the creation of the infrastructure to forcibly displace and transfer the Palestinian population outside of Gaza.

Last month, NPR, the *Financial Times*, and *Haaretz*

reported that the Israeli military has drawn up a plan to fully occupy the Gaza Strip, internally displace the remaining population, and provide only the “minimum caloric amount necessary for survival,” in the words of *Haaretz*.

One month ago, the Israeli security cabinet formally voted to establish an office dedicated to overseeing the ethnic cleansing of Gaza.

Defense Minister Katz stated that the bureau would manage the “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.”

In 2007, Ben-Gvir was convicted by an Israeli court of racist incitement and support for groups on terrorism blacklists. Since 2023, his policies of ethnic cleansing and mass killing have been adopted by the Israeli government in its genocidal onslaught on Gaza, using the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack as a pretext.

According to Gaza’s health ministry, at least 51,300 Palestinians have been killed in the genocide to date, with 1,928 Palestinians killed since Israel unilaterally abrogated a ceasefire agreement on March 18.

On Wednesday, Israeli airstrikes killed 25 people, including 11 people in a school that was transformed into an emergency shelter. This followed the killing of at least 17 people, mostly women and children, in strikes on Tuesday.

Despite the ongoing famine, coverage of the humanitarian situation has almost totally dropped from news coverage in the United States. And after having overseen the Gaza genocide under President Joe Biden, the Democrats have voted repeatedly against any restrictions on US arms sales to Israel under the Trump administration.



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