

For first time, Netanyahu names ethnic cleansing of Gaza as official war aim

Andre Damon
21 May 2025

On Wednesday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for the first time officially stated that an Israeli war aim is the ethnic cleansing of Gaza, openly stating what had been the unspoken goal of Israel since October 7, 2023.

In a news conference, Netanyahu said that Israel “is ready to end the war, under clear conditions that will ensure the safety of Israel – all the hostages come home, Hamas lays down its arms, steps down from power, its leadership is exiled from the Strip... Gaza is totally disarmed, and we carry out the Trump plan. A plan that is so correct and so revolutionary.”

The *Times of Israel* commented that “This represents the first time the US president’s plan for moving Gaza civilians out of the Strip has been presented as an Israeli demand for ending the war.”

In February, US President Trump declared that “The US will take over the Gaza Strip.... We’ll own it.” He said the US will “level it out” and “create an economic development that will supply unlimited numbers of jobs.”

Trump explicitly called for the ethnic cleansing of Gaza, stating that other countries will “build various domains that will ultimately be occupied by the 1.8 million Palestinians living in Gaza.”

Netanyahu’s declaration stands as an exposure of the Biden administration, which falsely claimed that it was seeking to create the conditions for a “two-state solution” even as it funded, armed and defended the Israeli genocide. In reality, the total occupation and ethnic cleansing of Gaza was always the aim of the Netanyahu government, which used the events of October 7 as a pretext to carry out this plan.

Netanyahu’s statement marks a public confirmation that “Operation Gideon’s Chariots,” announced by Netanyahu earlier this month but launched at full scale

following Trump’s trip to the Middle East last week, will be the means by which Israel seeks to carry out the forcible displacement of the Palestinian people in Gaza from their homeland.

It confirms, moreover, that a central aim of Trump’s trip to the Middle East was creating the diplomatic preconditions for the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people.

Trump was warmly embraced by the governments of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the UAE, with the Qatari government giving Trump the gift of a \$400 million jumbo jet to serve as his private plane while he was scheming the mass killing and dispossession of the Palestinian people.

Last Friday, as Trump was leaving the region, NBC News reported that the White House has been actively negotiating with governments throughout the region to accept the displaced Palestinian people.

The leading candidates which have emerged are Libya and Syria, two states whose governments were overthrown by US-backed Islamist insurgencies.

Even as Netanyahu openly adopts the ethnic cleansing of Palestine as an official war aim, his cabinet members are even more blunt, going right up to the verge of using the term “ethnic cleansing” as a positive good.

On Monday, Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said that Israel’s goal is “destroying everything that’s left of the Gaza Strip.” He declared, “We are conquering, cleansing, and remaining in Gaza until Hamas is destroyed.”

Knowing it has the full support of the Trump administration, the Israeli government is going to previously unheard-of lengths of criminality.

On Wednesday, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) opened fire on a group of diplomats from over 20

countries, including the UK, France and Canada, as they were visiting a refugee camp in the West Bank city of Jenin. Video footage of the tour shows Israeli troops consistently and repeatedly firing at least seven shots at the delegation as they fled. In a statement, the IDF admitted that they fired at the delegation, calling the attack “warning shots” after it claimed the delegation deviated from an approved course.

Despite Israeli claims that it has let a small number of trucks through to Gaza after a total 11-week-long blockade of food, fuel and energy, the entire population of Gaza remains on the brink of famine.

In a statement Wednesday, the head of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) warned that the amount of food that has been allowed in is tiny compared to the amount necessary to prevent starvation. “Children in Gaza continue to be killed, injured, and deprived of aid,” UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell said in a post on X. “The few trucks that have entered with life-saving supplies are nowhere near sufficient and have yet to reach those in desperate need. We’re running out of supplies inside Gaza, and we’re running out of time.”

“The limited supplies finally being allowed to enter [Karem Abu Salem border crossing] are nowhere near enough to meet the needs in Gaza, which are vast, which are tremendous. Much, much more aid needs to get in,” said UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric.

On Wednesday, Israeli attacks killed 82 people in Gaza, bringing the official death toll to 53,655 with 121,950 wounded, Gaza’s health ministry said. The number of people killed since March 18, when Israel unilaterally broke a two-month ceasefire, has risen to over 3,509.

On Tuesday, CNN reported that Israel is making active preparations for an attack on Iran’s nuclear program, moving aircraft into position and carrying out training attacks.

In a report Wednesday, Axios confirmed CNN’s reporting, citing Israeli intelligence sources, with Axios reporting that “Israel Defense Forces have been conducting exercises and other preparations for a possible strike in Iran.”

One source told Axios, “There was a lot of training and the U.S. military sees everything and understands Israel is preparing.” Another added, “Bibi is waiting for the nuclear talks to collapse and for the moment

Trump will be disappointed about the negotiations and open to giving him the go-ahead.”



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact