

# Former Israeli Prime Minister Olmert denounces Gaza “humanitarian city” plan as concentration camp for Palestinians

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Less than a week after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with US President Trump at the White House, the real purpose of the discussions as a planning session for the final stages of the genocide and ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from Gaza has been confirmed.

While the mass slaughter of Palestinians is continuing, the US-Israeli plan to construct a militarized “humanitarian city” in southern Gaza has been exposed by former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert what it is: a proposal to build a concentration camp.

Beginning on Sunday, Olmert issued a scathing condemnation of the plan to construct a so-called “humanitarian city” in Gaza, warning that it would amount to nothing less than a “concentration camp” for Palestinians. His remarks, delivered in interviews and public statements over the past days, have been reported widely.

Olmert’s comments are in response to the plan outlined by Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz and backed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, to relocate approximately 600,000 Palestinians—and eventually Gaza’s entire population of over 2 million—into a purpose-built zone on the ruins of Rafah.

According to the proposal, once they enter the tiny enclave, Palestinians would only be allowed to leave if traveling abroad. The Israeli government claims this is a humanitarian measure to provide shelter and aid to displaced civilians, when it is obviously a transparent attempt at mass internment and ethnic cleansing.

“It is a concentration camp. I am sorry,” Olmert told *The Guardian*. “If they (Palestinians) will be deported into the new ‘humanitarian city,’ then you can say that this is part of an ethnic cleansing.” He elaborated, “When they build a camp where they (say they plan to) ‘clean’ more than half of Gaza, then the inevitable understanding of the strategy of this (is that) it is not to save (Palestinians). It is to deport them, to push them and to throw them away. There is no other understanding that I have, at least.”

Olmert’s warnings have confirmed statements by humanitarian organizations including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) which said the plan would “de-facto create massive concentration camps at the border with Egypt.” A West Bank-based Palestinian Authority spokesperson also said, “The humanitarian city has nothing to do with humanity.”

Olmert, who served as prime minister from 2006 to 2009 and has become a vocal critic of Netanyahu, also noted the broader conduct of the war and the actions of Israeli authorities in the occupied West Bank. He condemned the rise in violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinians, describing recent killings as “war crimes” and denouncing the complicity of Israeli authorities.

“There is no way that they can operate in such a consistent, massive and widespread manner without a framework of support and protection which is provided by the Israeli authorities in the Occupied Territories,” he said.

He also warned that the rhetoric and policies of extreme right-wing ministers in Netanyahu’s cabinet—who have used language such as “cleanse” in relation to Gaza—are fueling anti-Israel sentiment globally. “In the US there is more and more and more expanding expressions of hatred to Israel,” Olmert said.

Olmert also unmasked the fraudulent propaganda campaign mounted by the global imperialist political establishment that opposition to the Gaza genocide equals “antisemitism.” He said, “We make a discount to ourselves saying: ‘They are antisemites.’ I don’t think that they are only antisemites, I think many of them are anti-Israel because of what they watch on television, what they watch on social networks. This is a painful but normal reaction of people who say: ‘Hey, you guys have crossed every possible line.’”

The latest atrocities in Gaza include a deadly airstrike on children gathering water in the Nuseirat refugee camp and other mass killings at resettlement and refugee camps. These

events, unfolding against the backdrop of a catastrophic humanitarian crisis, expose the barbarity of Israel's campaign, carried out with the complicity of the US and other world powers.

On Sunday, July 13, a drone-fired missile struck a water distribution point in the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza, killing at least 10 people—six of them children—and injuring 16 more, including seven children. The victims had gathered with empty jerry cans beside a water tanker, desperate for clean water amid Gaza's worsening shortages. Residents described how families, forced to walk nearly two kilometers to reach the site, were lined up when the missile struck.

"We saw a drone hovering above, then suddenly there was a huge explosion. Children were screaming and running everywhere. There was blood, bodies on the ground, and people trying to carry the wounded away in their arms and on donkey carts," recounted Ramadan Nassar, a resident who witnessed the aftermath.

The dead and injured were rushed to al-Awda Hospital in Nuseirat, where overwhelmed medical staff struggled to cope with the influx. "We are horrified and heartbroken. This is a blatant violation of international humanitarian law, and a stark reminder that no one and no place is safe in Gaza," said Rabih Torbay, president and CEO of Project HOPE, whose clinic in Deir al Balah was also struck in a separate incident that killed 10 children and two women.

The Israeli military admitted responsibility for the massacre, describing it as a "technical error." In an official statement, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) claimed the missile was intended for an Islamic Jihad operative but "due to a technical malfunction in the munition, it struck dozens of meters away from the intended target."

The IDF added, "We make every effort to minimize harm to uninvolved civilians and regret any harm to uninvolved civilians," and announced an investigation into the incident. However, these statements ring hollow following many such statements while the massacres continue unabated.

On the same day, Israeli forces killed at least 12 people and wounded over 40 at a busy intersection in central Gaza, including a respected physician, Dr. Ahmad Qandeel. In Rafah, Khan Younis, and the Bureij refugee camp, further attacks on aid distribution points and displacement camps left dozens dead and many more injured.

According to *Al Jazeera*, citing the Wafa news agency, Israeli forces opened fire on Palestinians gathered at the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) aid center in Rafah, killing at least 31 people and injuring over 170, most with gunshot wounds to the extremities and upper body.

Eyewitnesses described the scenes at these sites as "chaotic and terrifying," with crowds of starving people

surging towards aid trucks, only to be met with live fire or airstrikes. "What were intended to be lifelines have instead turned into deadly choke points," *Al Jazeera* reported, highlighting the deliberate use of aid as a weapon of war.

The past 24 hours have seen some of the deadliest violence since the beginning of July. According to the *Washington Post*, 139 bodies were delivered to Gaza hospitals on Sunday, with many more believed to be trapped under rubble.

The Gaza Health Ministry reported that over 58,000 Palestinians have been killed since October 7, 2023, with women and children making up more than half the total. The true toll is likely higher, as thousands remain missing or buried in inaccessible areas. These figures do not include those who have died from preventable diseases, malnutrition, or lack of medical care—consequences of the deliberate destruction of Gaza's health infrastructure and blockade of humanitarian aid.

According to a report in the *New York Times* on Sunday, the Israeli military's renewed offensive is part of the effort to push thousands of families from neighborhoods in southern Gaza, especially the Tal al-Sultan area near the Egyptian border. These families, many of whom had only recently returned home during a brief ceasefire, were forced to flee on foot under shelling, carrying what little they could.

"Most of those who fled on Sunday trekked several miles northward to Khan Younis, only to find themselves without shelter due to a critical lack of essential supplies and tents," the local government of Rafah stated.

The *Times* detailed how the latest wave of mass displacement is part of the broader strategy to concentrate Gaza's population into the militarized zone, tightly controlled by Israeli forces, and cut off from the rest of the territory.

The reopening of the Rafah crossing with Egypt, under strict Israeli and Egyptian supervision, is being used to funnel out the sick and wounded, while most civilians are trapped in overcrowded camps with no prospect of returning to their homes.



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