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زبانهای اروپایی

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16.12.2023

Israeli officials spell out plans for ethnic cleansing of all Palestinians, as Gaza massacres continue

Following the United Nations General Assembly vote Tuesday for a ceasefire in Gaza, the Israeli government has not only pledged to continue the war but made clear its plan for an onslaught against the Palestinians across the whole region. Its leaders know they have full license to do so, whatever cynical votes are cast at the UN or statements made to the press by its imperialist backers.

On Wednesday, Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen declared, “Israel will continue the war against Hamas, with or without international support.”

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told military commanders the war would “continue until the end, until the victory, until the elimination of Hamas” and that “nothing will stop us.”



Palestinians look for the survivors of an Israeli strike in Rafah, Gaza Strip, Thursday, November 14, 2023

Around 18,800 people have already been killed in Gaza—over 300 in the last day—with thousands more still trapped, dead or alive, under rubble.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* explained this week, “When the fascist Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu speaks of ‘ Hamas’, he is speaking not of a political organization but of any will to resist on the part of the Palestinian population.”

The implications of this objective for Palestinians everywhere were spelled out by Israeli Communications Minister Shlomo Karhi, who commented Wednesday, “There will be no Palestinian state here. We will never allow another state to be established between Jordan and the [Mediterranean] sea.” This was, he said, “our country; the historical property of our ancestors.”

Israel’s ambassador to the UK Tzipi Hotovely reiterated the point in an interview with Sky News Thursday morning. Asked about the prospect of a future Palestinian state she replied, “Absolutely no. Israel knows today, and the world should know now that the Palestinians never wanted to have a state next to Israel.”

She added snidely, “They want to have a state from the river to the sea. They are saying it loud and clear.” Hotovely detailed the single Israeli state “from the river to the sea” she and the Zionists want to create in a 2013 essay, “The Five Stage Plan for the Greater Land of Israel”.

She argues that discussion of a two-state solution has “obstructed the most basic desire harboured by a majority of Israeli citizens—not to give up territory that was conquered through blood.”

Her five steps involve declaring full Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank, adopting as a Basic Law the principle of the State of Israel being a Jewish nation state (achieved in 2018), making full Israeli citizenship conditional on service in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), and encouraging the migration of a further two million Jews to Israel to ensure a Jewish majority as Palestinian areas are annexed.

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This would necessarily involve an eruption of violence from the IDF and its far-right vigilante allies. It is because the United States knows and supports this strategy that it has delayed the sale of 20,000 assault rifles to Israel—where they are set to be handed out among fascist settler groups—in an attempt to distance the White House from the worst of the crimes it authors.

What the Israeli state is preparing is a permanent state of war against the entire Palestinian population of the Occupied Territories and Israel itself in pursuit of their expulsion.

On Thursday, Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant told visiting US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan the war “will require a long period of time—it will last more than several months”. Earlier in the day the Knesset passed a wartime budget adding an additional \$7 billion, formally to cover the costs of the Gaza war, though opposition members alleged the funds would be directed to the Settlements and National Projects Ministry.

The IDF has already massively stepped up its aggression in the West Bank. An operation has been ongoing in the city of Jenin since Tuesday, with 12 Palestinians, including children, reported killed, 10 wounded and over 500 rounded up, with some needing medical treatment after “questioning”—roughly 100 are still detained. Raids and bulldozers have destroyed people’s homes and vehicles, and many families are now struggling to access food.

IDF soldiers have provocatively delivered Jewish prayers from mosque loudspeakers, forcing their suspension from operations for giving the game away.

As in Gaza, denying access to healthcare is a clear military objective. Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) International announced Wednesday, “Yesterday, a man had to carry his 13-year-old son to Khalil Suleiman hospital because Israeli armoured cars blocked ambulances. The boy died soon after.

“Yesterday and today, Israeli forces tear gassed the hospital in response to children throwing stones at armoured cars...

“Today, after a patient was discharged from hospital and an ambulance attempted to take her home, the ambulance was fired upon, and the same patient was re-admitted with a gunshot wound.”

In another post, the organisation recounted the shooting and killing of an unarmed teenager, Musa Ahmed Musa Khatib, inside the hospital. It described how “Israeli forces stopped ambulances taking discharged patients home outside Khalil Suleiman hospital.

Paramedics and ambulance drivers were ordered out of the ambulances, stripped and made to kneel in the street.”

The Jenin operation is now being expanded to local villages, while other raids have been carried out in Ramallah, Qalqilya, Nablus, Jericho, Bethlehem and Hebron. More than 280 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank since October 7, among them 69 children, and at least 4,400 detained.

Attacks in the West Bank replicate the programme being carried out with unrestrained savagery in Gaza, once again under the cover of a telecommunications blackout.

The Gaza Health Ministry reported Thursday that IDF forces occupying the Kamal Adwan Hospital in the north of the strip prevented medical staff from providing emergency care, leading to the deaths of two people. Soldiers reportedly stopped medical staff from moving between departments, and cut off food, electricity and water, including to 12 infants in the neonatal department. Staff and patients were later forcibly evacuated to the hospital yard.

Across Gaza, just 11 out of 36 hospitals are still functioning at all, according to the World Health Organization, and nine out of 28 primary health clinics. The UN has recorded 364 attacks on healthcare facilities in the Strip since October 7, and 300 health ministry staff killed.

The destruction of healthcare infrastructure prepares the way for a catastrophic spread of disease over winter, with flooding that brings with it water borne diseases and hypothermia already a major problem. “The perfect storm for disease has begun,” said UNICEF chief spokesperson James Elder.

Viruses and bacteria will spread like wildfire amid the overcrowded, squalid and starved conditions Israel has forced the population of Gaza into. According to the UN, over half of its people are now sheltering in the Rafah governate in the far south, in a tent mega-slum which has now been inundated with floodwater. In the city of Deir al-Balah further north, images show ambulance workers wading up to their waist in water trying to rescue the injured.

UN Palestinian refugee chief Philippe Lazzarini described the situation in Rafah: “It lacks infrastructure and all the basics. It is not a place to hold more than one million people. One warehouse is home to 30,000 people. Families live in tiny spaces only separated by blankets and plastic sheeting.”

Like the rest of the Strip, Rafah is under regular bombardment, despite the IDF declaring it a safe zone. On Wednesday night, an enormous airstrike obliterated two houses in the city, killing 26 people at a stroke.

Referring to the lack of aid entering Gaza and the increasing difficulty in distributing it, Lazzarini said people were “desperate and hungry.” He added, “Gaza is not habitable as a place anymore.”

While continuing its genocidal assault, Israel and its allies are mounting provocations against Lebanon, Syria and Iran in the hope of a wider war in which every Palestinian can be treated as an enemy combatant.

Iranian Defence Minister Mohammad Reza Ashtiani warned Thursday of “extraordinary problems” if plans go ahead for a US-led military task force in the Red Sea, on the pretext of Houthi rebel attacks on shipping. NBC reported of the “worries grow[ing]” in Lebanon “that Netanyahu won’t stop with Gaza.”

World Socialist 15.12.2023