



## [Israeli Plan to Control Aid Delivery and Expand the Gaza War is Rebuked as a Clear Violation of International Law](#)

United Nations (UN) relief agencies and other humanitarian organizations have strongly rebuked Israel’s plan to take control of aid distribution in Gaza, a proposal that was pushed through by the Israeli cabinet earlier this week in addition to one that would expand the military offensive and include the occupation of territory in the enclave. Aid groups have highlighted how the plan represents a blatant violation of international law for a variety of reasons. First, it contravenes the principles of international law stipulating that humanitarian aid and relief services are to be carried out by independent entities, not ones with political or military motives. If implemented, Israel’s plan would pave the way for it to further obstruct humanitarian relief services, and place arbitrary and opaque restrictions on who is able to provide and receive aid. Second, the design of the plan would compel many of the most vulnerable in Gaza – including those less mobile – to have to move in order to get assistance, and international law forbids this type of forcible displacement of people. Additionally, the private U.S. security contractors that Israel seeks to use as a part of its aid takeover plan are not considered eligible humanitarian partners for grants from major donors like the European Union (EU) – hence why the EU opposes any changes that would result in Israel seizing full control over this in Gaza as well.

On top of the array of aforementioned ways in which Israel’s plan violates international law, rights groups have also outlined the gravity of the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza. For over two months since early March, Israel has imposed a full ban on the entry of humanitarian aid and supplies into the Gaza strip, including food, water, essential medical supplies and equipment, fuel, and material for shelters. As a result, critical humanitarian supplies have rapidly depleted or run out entirely, exacerbating already dire conditions. Medical workers have documented the troubling uptick in the number of people, particularly children, who have been admitted to healthcare facilities suffering from acute nutrition-related issues over the past two months – all directly correlated to the widening scarcity of humanitarian supplies. UNICEF and other UN agencies have noted the dramatic increase in cases of children with severe levels of malnutrition since March, which has seen an estimated 80% rise during this time period. In order to truly help alleviate the worsening humanitarian conditions in Gaza, UN officials are denouncing Israel’s plans and instead calling for an end to the imposed blockade so that neutral relief agencies can bring in the necessary supplies to address the crisis. Yet all the while, Israel is working to set up a new entity called the “Gaza Humanitarian Foundation” and registering it in Switzerland as a part of its propaganda efforts to try and “sell the idea” of its aid takeover – an action which observers highlight is merely aimed at distracting from its violations in Gaza and offering it the opportunity to further hinder actual established and reputable aid organizations. It was also revealed earlier this week that the Trump administration is pressuring international humanitarian organizations behind the scenes to cooperate with Israel’s plan, despite it being widely criticized. The Israeli government’s direct control over this process would allow it to manipulate the mechanisms for aid distribution, and as one commentator pointed out, institute a system of “aid denial” rather than one which guarantees fair dissemination to all in need.

Similarly to its heavily criticized aid distribution takeover, Israel’s plan to expand the Gaza War has elicited rebuke as well. The intensified military offensive consists of the intention to relocate millions of Gazan civilians – despite the fact that forcible displacement is a crime under international law. Israeli officials have suggested that it includes the “conquest” and military occupation of additional territory in the Gaza Strip, with Netanyahu

continuing to promote the idea of expelling Palestinians from the enclave and looking for ways in which to do so. Expanded Israeli military operations in Gaza will lead to countless more civilians being killed, further destruction, and a deepening of humanitarian suffering there. Israel's plan has been condemned internally, by the Hostage Families Forum – which represents the majority of relatives of those being held in Gaza – and some officials, both of whom contend that the Israeli government is acting against the will of most citizens who overwhelmingly favor a deal to secure the release of all remaining hostages over a dangerous prolonging of the conflict. The prospect of an intensified Israeli offensive has prompted serious international concern too. French, British, and UN officials, among others, have labeled the plan as unacceptable and in violation of international humanitarian law.

Even in the midst of all of the condemnation that it is garnering for its plan to control aid delivery and expand the Gaza War, Israel is also attempting to initiate a repressive crackdown on the work of humanitarian organizations that provide aid and monitor human rights violations. The Israeli government has put new regulations in place for these aid groups requiring them to submit detailed information, all aimed at giving officials the ability to disqualify them for merely shedding light on examples of Israel violating international law. Dozens of prominent humanitarian organizations signed a letter this week protesting the new rules and drawing attention to how they are based on purely politicized criteria that seeks to silence advocacy and suppress evidence of Israeli rights abuses and war crimes. Both this and Israel's recent plan regarding the administering of aid are clear unlawful attempts to assert control over what should be impartial humanitarian operations free from the harmful influence of politically-motivated entities.