

Lo sterminio di Gaza è sempre stato il piano di Israele, ma ora è ufficiale

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È passato un anno da quando Israele ha invaso Rafah per la prima volta e ha oltrepassato l'illusoria " linea rossa " di Biden. L'esercito israeliano ha distrutto il valico di Rafah, isolando Gaza dall'Egitto e isolandola completamente dal mondo esterno. Israele era libero di procedere allo sfollamento di massa dei palestinesi lontano dal confine egiziano, ma non ha mai ammesso tale obiettivo.

Ma ora Rafah non esiste più e il piano recentemente approvato da Israele per rioccupare Gaza a tempo indeterminato ha reso esplicito ciò che molti si aspettavano già da mesi: che il secondo fine della creazione di installazioni militari permanenti e zone cuscinetto a Gaza è quello di facilitare l'espulsione di massa dei palestinesi.

Israele sta ora dichiarando apertamente le sue intenzioni e pubblicizzando pubblicamente la pulizia etnica come "migrazione volontaria". Questo non è avvenuto dall'oggi al domani, ma è stato il risultato di un lento e deliberato processo di accerchiamento dei palestinesi in sotto-ghetti concentrati e sotto attacco, creando al contempo vaste zone cuscinetto militari su porzioni di territorio di Gaza completamente appiattito. Il piano è stato attuato a pezzetti negli ultimi 18 mesi, ma ora i pezzi stanno andando chiaramente al loro posto.

Proprio la scorsa settimana, Benjamin Netanyahu ha annunciato che l'obiettivo principale di guerra di Israele, ovvero "sconfiggere i suoi nemici", ha superato l'obiettivo di liberare i prigionieri israeliani a Gaza, riecheggiando le precedenti dichiarazioni del suo ministro delle Finanze, Bezalel Smotrich, il cosiddetto estremista.

Non si tratta di una novità. È sempre stato il piano di Israele, ma il governo israeliano ha dovuto scaglionarne l'attuazione nel corso di un anno e mezzo a causa di una serie di vincoli interni ed esterni. Eppure, ha continuato a preparare il terreno per la pulizia etnica a ogni passo.

The watershed moment came in February during the short-lived ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, when U.S. President Trump articulated his shocking plan for the U.S. to "own" Gaza and turn it into a "Riviera of the Middle East," while the people of Gaza would be relocated elsewhere. Suddenly, the President of the United States was endorsing a plan that Israel had never dared voice in public. Even a month earlier, Netanyahu had said in a televised statement that "Israel has no intention of permanently reoccupying Gaza or displacing its civilian population."

This is the exact plan that the Israeli war cabinet has just approved.

Since Trump made his February statement, which he later walked back, Israel has been emboldened to go full steam ahead with its plan. The resumption of the war and the blowing up of the ceasefire are partly informed by this newfound determination to see through Israel's "final solution" for the Gaza question. The reason it is able to do it is because the international community has barely lifted a finger to stop it.

But Trump's February announcement was not where Israel's strategy to take over the strip and displace its people originated. Well before Israel was forced by Trump to enter into the ceasefire with Hamas, the army had thrown all its force behind a military plan proposed by a cohort of Israeli generals based on an earlier vision laid out by retired Israeli general Giora Eiland. Dubbed "the Generals' Plan," its aim was to completely depopulate northern Gaza through siege and starvation. The implementation of the plan included completely sealing off the 400,000 Palestinians residing in the area and leaving them without food, water, or medicine; a non-stop wave of demolitions and detonations of residential buildings and houses; widespread carpet-bombing; and the direct, forcible evacuation of schools-turned-shelters and hospitals in the north.

By the time the ceasefire was reached on January 19, the population of north Gaza had been reduced to less than 100,000. The last functioning hospital in the area, Kamal Adwan Hospital, was also forcibly evacuated following an 80-day siege and several direct attacks by Israeli drones. Israeli forces also abducted several members of the medical staff, including the hospital's director, Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya, who continues to be detained by Israeli forces to this day.

The Generals' Plan failed after hundreds of thousands of Palestinians returned to the north in a historic return march during the ceasefire, setting up camp beside the rubble of their homes and sending a clear message that their displacement had been anything but "voluntary."

Israel's plans for realizing its solution to the "Gaza problem" had been frustrated, and it was dragged into the ceasefire kicking and screaming. Israel continued to stall at every stage of the ceasefire, sabotaging it at every opportunity and refusing to enter into negotiations that would see a permanent end to the war. It continued to bide its time, waiting for an opening. Trump gave Israel the opening it needed in February, and Netanyahu's war cabinet has been barreling through all internal obstacles within the Israeli political system ever since.

How Israel started implementing its 'voluntary migration' plan

In March, the Israeli Defense Ministry approved the creation of a special bureau to promote the expulsion of Palestinians. At the time, the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas was still in effect, albeit tenuously, as Israel refused to move to the second phase of the ceasefire talks, which would have involved negotiations over permanently ending the war. Five days after the ceasefire broke, U.S. National Security Advisor Mike Waltz was still saying that the idea of transferring Palestinians was "practical" and "realizable."

Then, in early April, Israel revealed the carving out of a new militarized strip of land south of Khan Younis called the Morag Corridor, cutting off the southernmost Rafah governorate from the rest of Gaza. Everything south of Morag, including all of Rafah, was announced as part of a military buffer zone, reducing the surface of the Palestinian enclave by a fifth. This was made possible by Israel's intensified bombing and demolition campaign of Rafah since the Israeli army invaded the governorate in May 2024, leveling all of the city's infrastructure.

Israel's Channel 12 reported that the aim of the Morag Corridor was to facilitate the "voluntary migration" of Palestinians, while Israel's Defense Minister, Israel Katz, announced in a televised statement that the Israeli army was "cutting off" the continuity of the Gaza Strip and implementing the voluntary migration plan. Katz reiterated this plan weeks later, stating that Israel's strategy in Gaza included destroying infrastructure, blocking the entry of humanitarian aid, and "promoting voluntary transfer."

Who is responsible?

Since the beginning of Israel's genocide in Gaza, Israel has revealed parts of its final plan in stages. At the start of the genocide, then Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said Israel was imposing a "total siege" on Gaza, preventing the entry of food, water, electricity, or fuel, and labeling Palestinians as "human animals." The genocidal implications of the war's endgame were apparent, but the unfolding of Israel's plan in Gaza continued to be concealed politically by endless rhetoric about ceasefire talks, and even the release of Israeli captives. The Israeli government now makes no pretenses of the captives' importance, after officially moving them to the bottom of the priority list of the war's goals.

Every step of the way, Israel has met no practical consequences for its escalation, and no government with any leverage over Israel has moved to impose any political repercussions. Even the generalized official rejection by European and Arab governments of Trump's Gaza plan wasn't followed by any action. And of course, Israel's refusal to move on to the second phase of the ceasefire and its constant violations of the truce were met with silence. That silence continues to be deafening as Israel carves the Morag Corridor, erases Rafah, and is now moving to do the same thing to other parts of Gaza.

Total impunity accompanied every one of Israel's milestones in the march toward exterminating Gaza, from the hundreds of bombings of schools, hospitals, aid workers, paramedics, and journalists, to the deliberate starvation of Gaza's population. Now, the permanency of Israel's occupation of Gaza is official, and so is the stated aim of ethnically cleansing its people. And we still have no reaction.

The fact that the silence persists as Israel's end goals have been made clear confirms that the extermination of Gaza was never the vision of the Israeli far-right, or even of Netanyahu personally; it was an international decision.

This must be the new realization that underlies any account of the destruction of Palestinian life, including the impending Israeli annexation of the West Bank and the full colonization of East Jerusalem, the Naqab, and any other part of historic Palestine where the Palestinian people still struggle to preserve their collective existence.

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