

# *You'll get hell: How Israeli officials justify using starvation as weapon of war in Gaza*

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By Humaira Ahad / PRESS TV

Lana no longer plays with her brother. The rosy-complexioned child who once ran barefoot across the courtyard now sits slumped against a cement wall, her yellowed skin barely concealing the skeleton underneath.

“She can’t walk. She can’t stand for long,” wrote Alaa Arafat, the aunt of little Lana. “All she wants is to sleep and sit. I can’t believe what has become of her.”

Lana is one of Gaza’s million children, over half the besieged territory's population, enduring the slow and systematic agony of the Israeli regime’s starvation campaign.

For months now, the war-ravaged coastal strip has been at the epicenter of what experts describe as a textbook case of genocidal assault—one that uses hunger itself as a calculated instrument of war.

The Health Ministry in Gaza reported that 101 Palestinians, including 80 children, have already died from starvation and dehydration since the genocidal war began. In the last week alone, dozens more hunger-related deaths were reported across the territory with haunting images shared on social media platforms.

A policy with deep roots

From former Israeli Prime Minister Levi Eshkol’s 1967 remark, “We’ll deprive Gaza of water, and the Arabs will leave,” to the current architects of the genocidal war, Israel’s approach has remained strikingly consistent, with starvation being used as an instrument of occupation and ethnic cleansing.

Internal documents and years of public statements by the regime's political and military officials paint a chilling picture, with almost all of them being unapologetic and brazen in their war rhetoric.

Starvation was first publicly crystallized in 2007, following the landslide electoral victory of the Hamas resistance movement in Gaza, when Dov Weissglas, adviser to the then-Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, openly called for starving Palestinians. “The idea is to put the Palestinians on a diet, but not to make them die of hunger,” he said.

Israeli documents revealed an explicit calculation of caloric needs for the Gaza population. The amount of food allowed inside the besieged strip was measured to hover just above famine thresholds.

Israeli rights group Gisha later explained the policy: “Israel banned glucose for biscuits and the fuel needed for regular supply of electricity, paralyzing normal life in Gaza and impairing the moral character of the State of Israel. I am sorry to say that major elements of this policy are still in place,” the group’s director was quoted as saying in 2010.

Starvation as a strategy

Since the start of Israel's genocidal war on Gaza on October 7, 2023, the regime has dropped the veil of plausible deniability. Starvation has now been embraced as an open tactic of war against Palestinians, especially vulnerable children.

One after another, regime officials have advocated denying food, water, fuel, and medicine to the entire population of Gaza.

Moshe Saada, an Israeli Knesset member, stated with brutal clarity that he was interested in “starving the Gazans and imposing a siege to the max,” adding that “whoever wants to leave will leave to a humanitarian zone that we will administer.” (April 24, 2025)

Itamar Ben-Gvir, far-right minister and a staunch advocate of settler-colonialism, declared that the food and aid depots “should be bombed in order to create military and political pressure.” (April 23, 2025)

Bezalel Yoel Smotrich, far-right finance minister and head of the Religious Zionism Party, said the time was ripe "to completely stop the transfer of humanitarian aid to Hamas... the time has come to occupy the Gaza Strip, to seize territory from them permanently ..." (February 10, 2025)

Avigdor Lieberman, former deputy prime minister and finance minister of the regime, took it further back to 2024: "The only arrangement that needs to be made with Gaza is to stop all transfers of humanitarian aid, equipment, fuel, electricity and water," he said. (August 28, 2024)

'We don't give Arabs anything'

According to Israeli apartheid policy, humanitarian aid convoys are routinely denied entry into the coastal territory. Fuel and water are cut. Trucks cleared by the UN are blocked, and even brutally attacked.

Daniella Weiss, former Israeli mayor and extremist settler leader, spoke of depopulation as a goal: "They will move. The Arabs will move ... We don't give them food, we don't give the Arabs anything. They will have to leave." (January 28, 2024)

Nissim Vaturi, deputy speaker of the Israeli Knesset, bragged of not allowing aid into Gaza: "Trucks with aid to the enemy? I blocked myself. I don't know if it was published, but I came and blocked the road with my car as well." (May 15, 2024)

Ghassan Alian, a major general in the Israeli army and the head of the so-called "Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories" (COGAT), called Gazans "human animals," dehumanizing them to justify the regime's goal of extermination.

"Hamas became ISIS and the citizens of Gaza are celebrating instead of being horrified. Human animals are dealt with accordingly. Israel has imposed a total blockade on Gaza, no electricity, no water, just damage. You wanted hell, you will get hell," he said. (October 9, 2023)

Yoav Gallant, former Israeli war minister, who is wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC), used the same dehumanizing language against Palestinians when he was part of the regime's war cabinet.

"No electricity, no food, no water, no gas. It's all closed. We are fighting animals and are acting accordingly," he said. (November 10, 2023)

Gottlieb, member of the Knesset, said: "At this very moment, aid trucks continue to enter the Gaza Strip! Enough! How long will we bow our heads and endure the shame? That's not how you defeat terrorism. Stop everything immediately... open fire in the north of the Gaza Strip against all incoming Gazans." (November 25, 2023)

Omar Bar-Lev, former Israeli minister of military affairs, proposed "a complete siege on Gaza," days after the regime launched its genocidal war on the coastal territory.

"No water, no electricity, no food. Like in Beirut 1982. Water for the south of the Gaza Strip - only in exchange for the return of the kidnapped children and women," he said. (October 17, 2023)

Starvation as a tool of extermination

Israel has long used hunger as a method of displacement, control, and coercion. Beyond military pressure, starvation has also been framed as a tool of psychological warfare and political engineering, a tactic meant to break the will of the Palestinian people by breaking their bodies.

Rami Igra, a former head of the Mossad's captive and missing division, stated that the goal was to "turn them (Gazans) from Hamas supporters to Hamas dislikers. And the way is supplying the humanitarian aid, through us." (February 13, 2024)

Revital Tali Gottlieb, a member of Knesset, noted that "without hunger and thirst among the Gaza population, we will not be able to recruit collaborators, we will not be able to recruit intelligence, we will not be able to bribe people, with food, drink, medicine, in order to obtain intelligence." (October 23, 2023)

Zvi Yehezkeli, a leading Arab affairs correspondent with Israel's News 13, proposed bringing the Gaza Strip "to the point of a humanitarian disaster, and then, maybe something which I think would also be a mistake, rebuild and bring in a Palestinian regime." (March 19, 2024)

By late 2023, even the façade of humanitarian concern had been stripped away. In speech after speech, top Israeli regime officials framed the suffering of civilians not as collateral damage, but as leverage.

The regime officials even suggested that their starvation policy against Palestinians in Gaza was approved by the United States.

The U.S. has vetoed several UN resolutions that called for a ceasefire and aid delivery to the besieged strip. Former US President Joe Biden even said that he found no evidence that Israel was intentionally starving Palestinians, despite UN and other human rights groups documenting mass starvation.

Retired general of the Israeli army Giora Eiland publicly acknowledged in January 2024 that the regime "needs to inform the US that we are stopping aid to Gaza."

Ron Dermer, Israeli minister of strategic affairs, flatly denied the humanitarian disaster: "There is no imminent famine [in Gaza], I think that is a complete lie and fabrication ... That is a libel against Israel ... 10% of UNWRA are Hamas operatives ... There is no starvation." (March 26, 2024)

Ben-Gvir said the transfer of humanitarian aid to Gaza was "not only madness ... but also endangers the IDF soldiers." (February 29, 2024)

Amichay Eliyahu, Israeli minister of heritage, also jumped into the fray: "You eradicate evil from the world. Do you want your pop [in Gaza] to drink? Release the hostages." (October 17, 2023)

As such rhetoric has grown louder in the wake of Israel's genocidal war on Gaza, top Israeli officials continue to brazenly justify starvation as a weapon of war.

Israel Katz, Israel's current war minister, rejected even the most basic humanitarian appeal, declaring that he strongly opposes ending the blockade and the introduction of goods into Gaza on humanitarian grounds. (October 15, 2023)

"All the civilian population in Gaza is ordered to leave immediately. We will win. They will not receive a drop of water or a single battery until they leave the world," he said. (October 13, 2023)

"Humanitarian aid to Gaza? No electrical switch will be turned on, no water hydrant will be opened and no fuel truck will enter until the Israeli abductees are returned home," he said a day before that. (October 12, 2023)

Eiland, the same day as the regime launched its genocidal war on Gaza, said the people of Gaza have two choices: "to stay and starve or to leave."

"We cut the supply of energy, water and diesel... But it's not enough. We have to prevent others from giving assistance to Gaza... The people should be told that they have two choices: to stay and to starve, or to leave." (October 7, 2023)

Yair Golan, an Israeli politician and reserve general, echoed him: "We should tell them: listen, until they're released, from our side, you will starve to death. This is completely legitimate."

In Gaza, as the death toll from deliberate starvation rises, Lana and countless other children like her stand as living proof of what happens when hunger is weaponized against a population, and the global powers not only fail to prevent it but actively enable it.

[ SOURCE: PRESS TV ]

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<https://www.radiohc.cu/en/noticias/internacionales/387977-youll-get-hell-how-israeli-officials-justify-using-starvation-as-weapon-of-war-in-gaza>



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