

## Aid Propaganda in Gaza: Sound Without Substance, and Aggressive Intentions





Northern Gaza Strip, June 16, 2025. (AP Photo / Jihad Al-Ashrafi)

The Israeli army spokesperson announced the launch of what were described as “safe” routes for aid entry, the resumption of airdrops, and the implementation of a so-called “humanitarian pause” in the three main areas where Gaza’s population has been forcibly concentrated.

This announcement marked a notable shift, following what could be seen as a setback in ceasefire negotiations. It came on the heels of unexpectedly escalatory statements from both the US and Israel, which contradicted earlier optimism conveyed by mediators to Palestinian resistance factions, most notably Hamas.

Although the announcement coincided with a surge in global media coverage of Gaza’s deepening famine, the timing appears tied to anticipated Israeli military plans. These plans seem aimed not merely at deflecting international criticism, but also at laying the groundwork for renewed escalation in the enclave.

### The Clamor of Humanitarianism

Despite the media fanfare that accompanied the Israeli government’s announcement of opening aid corridors—first disclosed by the Israeli army—the coverage seemed orchestrated and exaggerated. Hebrew, Arab, and international media outlets all amplified the move, framing it as a major breakthrough, though

it has yielded little tangible impact on the ground.

Details from the Israeli Prime Minister's Office indicated that, after a closed consultation session held by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, it was decided to implement a limited "humanitarian pause" in Gaza starting Sunday. The move appeared to be a symbolic gesture aimed at appeasing growing international criticism over Gaza's catastrophic humanitarian conditions.

Present at the meeting were Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar. Notably absent were National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir and Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich—two key figures in the far-right Religious Zionism bloc—who were deliberately excluded.

The statement also announced the resumption of airdropped aid in coordination with international organizations and the establishment of "safe humanitarian corridors" to ensure the passage of UN and NGO convoys delivering food and medicine to civilians.

The exclusion sparked outrage from Ben Gvir, who called the move unjustified, dismissing Netanyahu's explanation that it respected the Sabbath. "I'm always available in emergencies," he said, accusing Netanyahu of capitulating to a "false propaganda campaign led by Hamas" and putting Israeli soldiers at risk.

He added that the prime minister's recent talk of "alternatives to securing hostage releases" had in fact become a "surrender that strengthens Hamas, delays victory, and postpones the return of the hostages."

Despite extensive Israeli media coverage highlighting inflated truck counts and aid quantities, these figures failed to translate into actual relief. The aid that did enter Gaza was minimal and routed through areas left vulnerable to looting and lawlessness—effectively nullifying any real humanitarian impact.

According to Avi Ashkenazi, military affairs analyst for Israel's Maariv newspaper, the Southern Command and the Civil Administration orchestrated a "media stunt," bringing dozens of journalists to the Kerem Shalom crossing to showcase UN food shipments. Military sources claimed the shipments included flour, oil, rice, legumes, pasta, baby products, and canned goods—enough, supposedly, for 1,000 trucks and two-and-a-half weeks of supplies.

This coincided with a coordinated media effort to deny famine conditions in Gaza. Israeli government spokesperson David Mencer told reporters: "There is no famine in Gaza caused by Israel," alleging instead that Hamas was manufacturing the crisis by blocking aid distribution and looting supplies.

At the same time, the Israeli government continues to ban foreign journalists from entering Gaza to verify the humanitarian situation firsthand. Local

journalists remain under constant threat and intimidation. Most recently, Al Jazeera's Gaza correspondent Anas Al-Sharif faced a targeted incitement campaign for his coverage of famine and civilian collapse.

### Humanitarian Blackmail Repackaged

The new Israeli aid plan does not represent a retreat from previous US-backed frameworks, which failed to meet their objectives. Those earlier efforts attempted to substitute existing international institutions, especially UNRWA, with a so-called "Gaza Humanitarian Foundation"—a security entity cloaked in humanitarian rhetoric.

In this context, former US President Donald Trump's remarks underscored ongoing American support for these mechanisms. He stated that the US had provided \$60 million two weeks earlier to deliver food to Gaza, complaining: "Nobody thanked us," and promising further aid while urging other countries to contribute.

Thus, the Israeli plan can be seen as a repackaged version of the failed US blueprint. At its core lies a strategy of "forced demographic engineering" in Gaza—manipulating aid distribution to three specific overcrowded zones: western Gaza City, the central governorate, and the narrow coastal strip of Al-Mawasi west of Khan Younis.

By geographically restricting aid, Israel aims to impose a new demographic map, preventing displaced residents from returning to destroyed areas. It relies on the absence of organized distribution systems and deliberately refuses to secure aid convoys, creating chaos that enables criminal gangs and opportunists to hijack and resell aid on the black market.

This profiteering class has effectively become part of Israel's indirect control apparatus, pushing Gazan society toward two options: acquiescence to a local client system, or a slide into chaos, civil conflict, and societal collapse.

In a statement, Hamas condemned the Israeli airdrop policy as a strategy of "managing hunger," calling it a deceptive and symbolic move meant to whitewash Israel's image while sidestepping the Palestinian people's core demands: lifting the siege and ending deliberate starvation policies pursued by Netanyahu's government.

Hamas warned that the airdrops and so-called humanitarian corridors amount to a deliberate starvation policy—not a remedy—and that these tactics have led to over 1,000 deaths and nearly 6,000 injuries among civilians, constituting war crimes under international law.

### Realized Aggressive Intentions

A comparison of Israeli and American rhetoric with developments on the ground reveals that Israel's latest aid moves are not humanitarian gestures, but rather preparatory steps in a broader military escalation plan targeting Gaza.

Israel's insistence on reengineering aid mechanisms and its open repudiation of previously negotiated understandings—abandoned by both the Israeli government and US envoy Steve Weitzkopf—underscore its lack of intent to reach a prisoner exchange deal, withdraw from Gaza, or allow unrestricted aid entry.

This trajectory appears aligned between Israel and the US. It was shaped during Netanyahu's early July visit to Washington—a trip originally aimed at closing gaps and advancing a deal, but which instead marked the launch of a new escalation path.

Former President Trump's recent statements echoed this direction, aligning with similar calls from Israeli officials. " Hamas doesn't want a deal to stop the war and free the hostages," Trump said. "I think they're going to fall." He added that the time had come for Israel to escalate and "finish the job."

Soon after, Netanyahu spoke of exploring "alternative options" to retrieve hostages and dismantle Hamas's rule, following the recall of Israel's negotiating team from Doha. According to Axios, the Trump administration is already reassessing its Gaza strategy. Secretary of State Marco Rubio reportedly told Israeli hostage families: "We need to seriously rethink things."

Israeli officials told Axios they're unsure whether Trump's remarks represent a genuine shift or a negotiating ploy, but acknowledged they may amount to a green light for Netanyahu to intensify the war effort using even more extreme military measures.

Domestically, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich tacitly supported escalation, telling the Religious Zionism bloc in the Knesset he would not exit the coalition at this stage. "In wartime, decisions aren't based on politics," he said. "We're working on a strategic move. It's too soon to disclose it, but we'll soon see whether it works and what direction we're headed."

Within Israel's security cabinet, two competing plans are emerging:

Track One, backed by the security and military establishment, seeks to deepen ground control via a "gradual bite" strategy, aiming to seize up to 90% of Gaza's territory while encircling civilians in three separate enclaves—western Gaza City, the central region, and Al-Mawasi—depriving them of geographical continuity.

Track Two, championed by Netanyahu to appease his far-right allies, involves a "gradual annexation" plan—starting with the buffer zone, extending through northern Gaza, and eventually annexing swathes of territory into Israel

permanently.

As of now, no final decision has been reached. But the Trump administration has begun pressuring Netanyahu's government to choose between "total victory" and a "comprehensive truce"—a strategic crossroads with far-reaching implications for the future of the war and Netanyahu's political fate.

Ultimately, Israel's revised aid distribution plan is not a humanitarian breakthrough. It is a functional tool within its military campaign—whether for expanded ground control or territorial annexation. It aims to corral the population into isolated pockets and empty the rest of the territory for long-term domination. In this light, it is not relief—it is war by other means, repackaged as aid in a broader strategy of destruction, displacement, and siege.

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