

Israel's plan to occupy Gaza City sparks global outcry



Palestinians walk along a street amid war-damaged buildings in Gaza City on August 8, 2025.
● AFP

International Desk

Israel's military will "take control" of Gaza City under a new plan approved by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's security cabinet, touching off a wave of international criticism Friday. Nearly two years into the war in Gaza, Netanyahu faces mounting pressure to secure a truce to pull the territory's more than two million people back from the brink of famine and free the hostages held by Palestinian fighters. Under the newly approved plan, the Israeli army "will prepare to take control of Gaza City while distributing humanitarian assistance to the civilian population outside combat

zones", the premier's office said Friday. Netanyahu's office said majority of the security cabinet had adopted "five principles", including demilitarization of the territory and "the establishment of an alternative civil administration that is neither Hamas nor the Palestinian Authority".

Global criticism

The new plan triggered swift criticism from across the globe, with EU, Belgium, China, Turkey, the UK and the UN's rights chief issuing statements of concern.

In a major shift, meanwhile, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz announced

his country was halting military shipments to Israel, saying it was "increasingly difficult to understand" how the new plan would help achieve legitimate aims.

Israeli opposition leader Yair Lapid denounced the cabinet's move as "a disaster that will lead to many other disasters".

He warned on X that it would result in "the death of the hostages, the killing of many soldiers, cost Israeli taxpayers tens of billions, and lead to diplomatic bankruptcy".

The main campaign group for hostages' families also slammed the plan, saying it amounted to "abandoning" the captives.

An expanded Israeli offensive could see ground troops operate in densely populated areas where hostages are believed to be held, local media have reported.

The Israeli army said last month that it controlled 75 percent of the Gaza Strip, mainly from its positions in the territory along the border.

Out of 251 hostages captured during Hamas's 2023 attack, 49 are still being held in Gaza, including 27 the military says are dead.

'Sacrificing hostages'

Hamas on Friday said the "plans to occupy Gaza City and evacuate its residents constitutes a new war crime".

It warned Israel that the operation would "cost it dearly", and that "expanding the aggression means sacrificing" the hostages.

International concern has been growing over the suffering of Palestinians in Gaza, where a UN-backed assessment has warned that famine is unfolding.

The World Health Organization said at least 99 people have died from malnutrition in the territory this year, with the figure likely an underestimate.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Thursday in a letter addressed to OIC Secretary General Hissein Brahim Taha, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, and Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan called for an emergency meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to address the "humanitarian catastrophe" unfolding in Gaza.

"The appalling situation in Gaza has now become one of the gravest crises facing the Islamic Ummah and the international community," Araghchi said.

"The conditions in Gaza have exceeded the limits of human endurance. What is unfolding is not merely a humanitarian crisis — it is the systematic destruction of a besieged civilian population. The scale and intensity of the crimes being committed call for immediate and coordinated action."

Meanwhile, in a phone call with his Egyptian counterpart Badr Abdelatty, Araghchi called for united Islamic action to halt Israel's genocide in Gaza and attacks on Lebanon.

"In this call, both sides discussed the dire humanitarian conditions in Gaza resulting from the continuation of the cruel siege of the Strip, and the regime's aggressive plans to intensify attacks and fully occupy the Gaza Strip," the Iranian Foreign Ministry said in a Friday statement.

Top general: Iran will never ask for permission to defend its rights

National Desk

Iran's Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi said on Thursday that Iran will never ask for permission from anyone to defend its rights, warning that in the event of any new aggression, Iran's response will be more decisive and unlike anything in the past.

Addressing a ceremony to commemorate those killed in a recent Israel's unprovoked aggression against Iran, General Mousavi praised the country's combat and defense capabilities, saying the Islamic Republic enjoys full deterrence in the face of enemies.

"The deterrence power of the Islamic Republic of Iran is complete, and as Leader of the Islamic Revolution [Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei] has stated, the Iranian nation is well-equipped both for negotiations and for defense," he said.

"The Iranian nation is not a war-seeking nation; but if the enemies intend to once again invade and attack this great country, our response will be more crushing and different from the past."

Mousavi further noted that the killing of Iranian commanders, scientists, students, athletes, among others, during the terrorist assault reinforced national unity and amplified the voice of the people's resilience.

"The enemies do not realize that if an aggressor sets foot on this soil, Iranians — regardless of their creed and belief — will stand united against them," he said. On June 13, Israel launched an act of aggression against Iran, triggering a 12-day war that killed nearly 1,100 people in the country.

The United States also entered the war by bombing three Iranian nuclear sites in a grave violation of international law.

In response, the Iranian Armed Forces targeted strategic sites across the occupied territories as well as the Al-Undead air base in Qatar, the largest American military base in West Asia.

Mousavi also warned American and Western states-



Iran's Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi speaks during a ceremony held in Tehran on August 7, 2025, to commemorate those killed in the recent Israeli aggression against Iran.
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men against sacrificing their countries' fate and future to save Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

He further reiterated Iran's message of peace and stability to the region, voicing the country's determination to create lasting security through regional cooperation and not allow Israel to advance its expansionist goals via sedition.

The top general said that Israel's main objective is to drag Iran into chaos and war.

"Today, we are simultaneously fighting on various fronts. The hybrid war by the enemies has targeted our national morale and unity. In these recent events, everyone fully realized that the goal of the Zionist regime is not what it falsely claims. Rather, the cursed Zionist regime is trying to push our beloved Iran toward chaos and war."

Tehran slams Paris's double standards over Iran's nuclear program

Iran sharply denounced France at the United Nations, saying Paris is distorting facts and promoting double standards over Tehran's nuclear program while ignoring Israel's undeclared arsenal. In a letter to UN Secretary-General António Guterres and Security Council President Eloy Alfaro de Alba, Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, Amir Saied Iravani, rejected France's remarks as "unwarranted, provocative, and politically motivated."

His response came after a French representative at the August 6 meeting on the "Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction" accused Iran of worsening what it called a "proliferation crisis."

"Such a baseless allegation is not only wholly irrelevant to the subject matter of the meeting... but also represents a deliberate distortion of facts," Iravani wrote on Thursday.

"Iran's nuclear program remains exclusively peaceful and fully transparent. Iran continues

to honor its obligations under the NPT," he added.

The ambassador condemned France's selective concern. He pointed out that Paris, a nuclear-armed state and permanent member of the Security Council, has long failed to meet its own obligations under Article VI of the NPT—which requires disarmament—and has played a central role in enabling Israel's clandestine nuclear weapons program. "It is deeply disappointing and hypocritical that France... voices concern over Iran's peaceful nuclear program while ignoring its own long-standing role in undermining the non-proliferation regime," the letter stated. "France remains silent on Israel's nuclear arsenal, and has never called for its accession to the NPT."

There is credible historical evidence that France played a significant role in helping Israel develop its nuclear capabilities during the 1950s and early 1960s.



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