

US Congress: Reject Bill to Support Forced Israeli Displacement of Palestinians to Third Countries

US Should Push Israel to End War Crimes, Accept Ceasefire

By [Democracy for the Arab World Now](#)

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Democracy for the Arab World Now

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The United States should oppose any Israeli actions that could result in the forced displacement of Palestinians from Gaza, said Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN). The group urged Congress to reject any supplementary funding bills that propose funding humanitarian aid to Palestinians who have been displaced from Gaza to neighboring countries.

Israeli actions, statements, and policy directives, including a [leaked policy document](#) drafted by the Israeli intelligence ministry that recommends the permanent forced transfer of Palestinians in Gaza to Sinai indicate that Israel is involved in forced displacement of Palestinians in Gaza to third countries.

"The Biden administration isn't just giving a green light for ethnic cleansing—it's bankrolling it," said Sarah Leah Whitson, DAWN's Executive Director. "Gaslighting Americans into facilitating long-held Israeli plans to depopulate Gaza under the cover of 'humanitarian aid' is a cruel and grotesque hoax."

On October 20, 2023, the White House sent a request to Congress for supplemental funding for the current fiscal year, which, among other things, includes logistical, infrastructure, and other material support to make possible housing displaced Palestinians from Gaza to neighboring countries. This section of the request states:

These resources would support displaced and conflict affected civilians, including Palestinian refugees in Gaza and the West Bank, and to [sic] address potential needs of Gazans fleeing to neighboring countries. This would include food and nonfood items, healthcare, emergency shelter support, water and sanitation assistance, and emergency protection. This would also include potential critical humanitarian infrastructure costs needed for the refugee

population to provide access to basic, life-sustaining support. This crisis could well result in displacement across [the] border and higher regional humanitarian needs, and funding may be used to meet evolving programming requirements outside of Gaza.

“The best way to protect Palestinian civilians from the wrath of war is to announce and enforce a ceasefire,” said Raed Jarrar, DAWN’s advocacy director. “Rather than pushing Palestinians to Egypt, Israel should allow Palestinian civilians to cross the apartheid fence into Israel. Maybe Palestinians can set up tent cities in the same towns and villages they were displaced from during the first Nakba 75 years ago.”

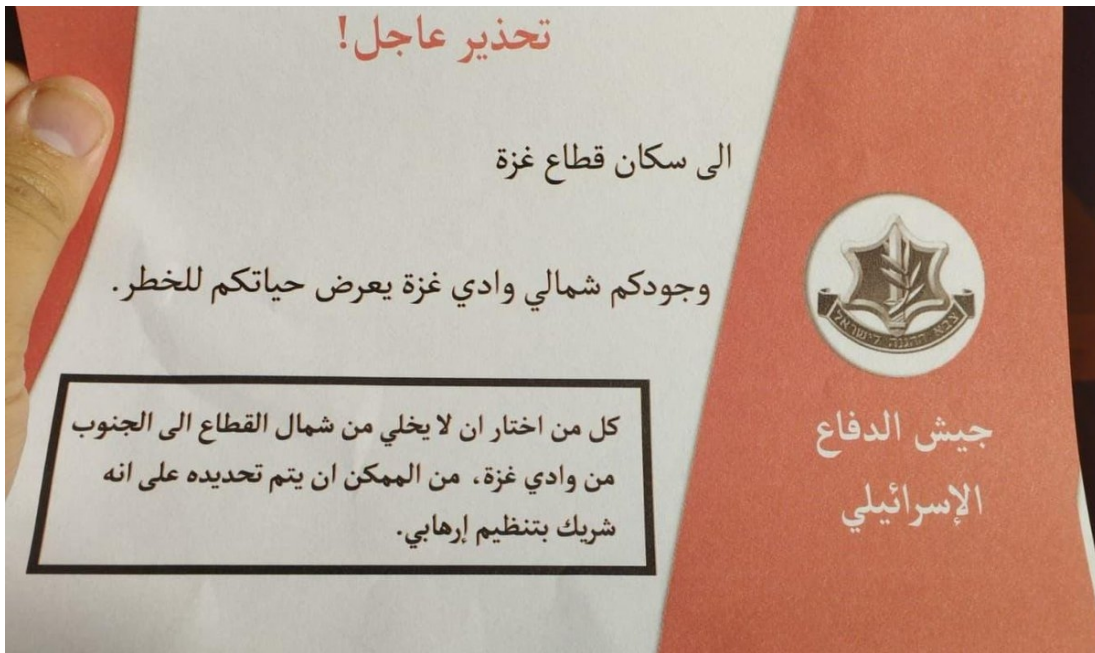
Congress should vote no on any bill mirroring this language or any authorization for funding activities, infrastructure, or aid outside of Israel and Palestine because they effectively facilitate, fund and reward the forced transfer of Palestinians.

Supporting Israeli efforts to forcibly transfer Palestinians to Egypt would make U.S. officials liable for complicity in war crimes. Article 8 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court includes the “Deportation or forcible transfer of population” as a war crime. Article 25 of the same statute defines individual criminal responsibility and states that a person shall be criminally responsible and liable for punishment for a crime within the jurisdiction of the Court if that person “aids, abets or otherwise assists in its commission or its attempted commission, including providing the means for its commission.”

“Both by word and by deed, Israeli officials are pursuing a broader strategy to permanently remove Palestinians from their native lands, and counting on the US to pay for it,” said Whitson. “Congress should vote against any aid package that could support these acts, which amount to violations of human rights and grave breaches of the laws of war.”

Palestinian [civil society organizations](#), [prominent analysts](#), [politicians](#), and many others are raising alarm bells about Israeli plans to forcibly displaced Palestinians from Gaza, the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, and even Palestinians with Israeli citizenship. According to UNRWA, some 1.4 million out of Gaza’s 2.3 million population are now internally displaced, with over 613,000 taking refuge in facilities that are holding up to 12 times their design capacity.

There is ample evidence that Israel is working to ensure that Gaza is uninhabitable and to force Palestinians to flee to Egypt. Since October 10, 2023, Israel has imposed a “[complete siege](#)” on Gaza, cutting off the distribution of fuel, food, water, medicine, and electricity, in violation of the laws of war. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Israel has destroyed or damaged at least [42 percent](#) of all housing units in the Gaza Strip. Israeli [leaflets](#) and automated phone messages have warned Gaza residents that they will be identified as accomplices “in a terrorist organization” if they don’t relocate, a move that contravenes international law on coercive displacement. Israeli airstrikes have not only targeted northern Gaza but have continued to bombard southern regions, leaving no safe havens for civilians.



A leaflet carrying the insignia of the Israeli military reading in Arabic: “Anyone who chooses not to leave from the north of the [Gaza] Strip to south of Wadi Gaza may be determined an accomplice in a terrorist organization.” (Source: [Amnesty International](#)/X)

The Israeli government appears to be implementing a plan to permanently move Palestinians in Gaza to Egypt. On October 28, 2023, a local Israeli [newspaper](#) leaked a policy memo by the Israeli Intelligence Ministry that recommends forcibly and permanently transferring the Gaza population to Sinai, and harnessing the international community for the move. The document also suggests promoting a dedicated campaign for the residents of Gaza that will “motivate them to agree to the plan.” In addition, the Misgav Institute recently [published a plan](#) for the “relocation and final settlement of the entire Gaza population.” The Misgav Institute is headed by former Netanyahu National Security Advisor Meir Ben Shabbat, who remains influential in Israeli security circles. [Other](#) influential Israeli think tanks have also supported the proposal, further amplifying the rhetoric surrounding the potential mass displacement of Palestinians from Gaza.

Recent remarks by notable Israeli officials underscore Israeli plans to ensure that Gaza is uninhabitable, forcing Palestinians to flee to Egypt. Yoav Galant, the defense minister, [declared](#) that Gaza will never return to what it was. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed the Palestinian population in Gaza directly, [telling them](#) to “leave now.” Former Israeli National Security Council head [Giora Eiland](#) argued that

“Israel needs to create a humanitarian crisis in Gaza, compelling tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands to seek refuge in Egypt or the Gulf.”

[Israeli war cabinet member and minister Gideon Sa’ar](#) stated:

“We must make the end of our campaign clear to everyone around us. Whoever starts a war against Israel must lose territory.”

“Rather than demanding a ceasefire to protect surviving Palestinian civilians from further atrocities, the Biden administration is cynically manipulating us into accepting ‘aid’ to expelled Palestinians as a consolation prize,” said Whitson.

Any forced movement of some or all Palestinians from Gaza into Egypt would be a grave breach of international humanitarian law. [Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention](#) prohibits the individual or mass forcible transfer or deportation of protected persons to any other country, regardless of the motive. It would also constitute a grave breach of [Article 17\(2\) of the Second Additional Protocol](#) to the Geneva Conventions, which prohibits ordering or forcing a civilian population to be displaced. Deportation and forcible population transfer are crimes against humanity under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which has an active investigation into the situation in Palestine which includes the current war.

The international community has rightfully been calling for humanitarian corridors to ensure that vital supplies—primarily food, water, and fuel for electricity generators—are able to enter Gaza. Likewise, safe zones are an important tool for the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Palestinian human rights organizations also have pleaded for international protection against ethnic cleansing after Defense Galant cut off food and water to millions of Palestinians in Gaza.

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