

Israeli lawmakers call on military to destroy food, water and power sources in Gaza

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Eight members of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee called on the defense minister to order the destruction of all sources of water, food and energy in northern Gaza to ensure Hamas' defeat, amid international criticism of Israel's continued offense in the Gaza Strip.

The lawmakers maintained in a letter to Defense Minister Israel Katz that the actions of the Israel Defense Forces in Gaza "do not enable achieving the war objectives as defined by the government, which is the dismantling of Hamas' governing and military capabilities."

The letter does not mention returning the hostages as a war goal defined by the security cabinet, and said the IDF's plan to evacuate the

population in the north of the Strip to the south "isn't being done properly."

The MKs who signed the letter are Amit Halevi, Nissim Vaturi and Osher Shkalim (Likud), Tzvi Succot and Ohad Tal (Religious Zionism), Limor Son Har-Melech (Otzma Yehudit) and Avraham Bezalel (Shas).

They said that "after encircling the area and the humanitarian evacuation, the IDF is not treating those who remain as the enemy, as is customary [in international law](#) and [in all Western armies](#), thus endangering our soldiers' lives by entering into the densely built area."



Palestinians gather to receive food cooked by a charity kitchen in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip on Thursday. Credit: Hatem Khaled/Reuters

The MKs urged Katz to reconsider the war plans, and after surrounding the northern Strip, to order the forces there to destroy the [sources of water](#), food and energy in the region, to kill

anyone moving in the area who "doesn't come out with a white flag" and then "to enter gradually for [a complete cleansing of the enemy's nests.](#)"

They said that the IDF must take this course of action not only in the northern Strip but in [any other given sector.](#)

They further stressed that despite their requests, they had not received from the IDF officials attending the committee sessions answers as to why they don't act in this way and what the plans are from now on.



Children warm by the fire at the Bureij camp for displaced Palestinians on Monday. Credit: Eyad Baba/AFP

"[Control of \[Gaza's\] territory and its population](#) is the only basis for clearing enemy strongholds," they said, adding this will also not lead to a war of attrition "in which Israel is the main side being exhausted."

The lawmakers added that the army's ground incursion into northern Gaza, which began in October, apparently "has not been carried out properly."

The IDF has renounced the controversial Generals' Plan, which had been criticized internationally, but has still been [carrying out a considerable part of this plan](#) on the ground.

The plan would force the complete evacuation of northern Gaza by labeling all remaining civilians as military targets and blocking supplies such as food and medication from entering the area.



The Gaza Strip as seen from southern Israel on Thursday. Credit: Kai Pfaffenbach/Reuters

The health system in the northern Strip has collapsed entirely and the humanitarian situation as a whole is worsening.

The Indonesian Hospital, the only one still operating after the Kamal Adwan Hospital was

ordered shuttered by the IDF, following a major operation arresting hundreds of terror suspects, [has no water or electric power](#).

In November the U.K.'s Guardian cited IDF sources saying they would not enable residents who had been evacuated from the north of the Strip back to their homes.



A mass funeral in Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip, in March. Credit: Said Khatib/AFP

Haaretz reported Thursday that the IDF is forcing residents of northern Gaza to move south, but is preventing them from taking personal possessions and even warm clothes, despite humanitarian organizations' reports of the bitter cold and acute shortage of warm clothing.

In the past week six infants and an adult reportedly died of hypothermia in Gaza.

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