

Israel Will Directly Occupy Gaza After War: Defense Minister

Planning continues to expel Gaza's 2.3 million inhabitants and reconquer Gaza for Jewish settlement

By [The Cradle](#)

Global Research, February 02, 2024

[The Cradle](#) 30 January 2024

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

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Israel plans to directly occupy the Gaza Strip after the war is over, giving its forces freedom to carry out military operations and assassinations as they do now in the West Bank, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant [told](#) the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on 30 January.

"After the war, when it's over, I think it's completely clear that Hamas won't control Gaza. Israel will control [it] militarily but won't control it in a civilian sense," Gallant said at a briefing at his office in Tel Aviv.

"When we're talking about military freedom of operation, look what happened tonight in Jenin," Gallant added, referring to the assassination of three Palestinians in the West Bank city early on Tuesday.

Israeli special forces dressed as civilians [raided](#) the hospital and killed three Palestinian resistance fighters. According to Palestinian media, one had been injured in a raid in October and was receiving treatment while the others were visiting him at the hospital.

"This is military freedom of operation at the highest level, and yet we don't control the area in a civilian sense," Gallant says. "This is achievable [in Gaza as well], and it will take time."

Gallant's comments suggest he wants Israel to occupy Gaza while shunning the responsibilities of an occupying power toward the Palestinian civilian population as required

under international humanitarian law (IHL).

IHL includes ensuring sufficient hygiene and public health standards and providing food and medical care to the population under occupation. Israel has been destroying Gaza's hospitals and health system, while imposing a blockade to limit the entry of food and water.

IHL prohibits collective or individual forcible transfers of the population from and within the occupied territory as well as transfers of the civilian population of the occupying power into the occupied territory.

Commenting on this issue, Defense Minister Gallant told US officials last week that he and the Israeli military will not allow the rebuilding of illegal outposts or settlements by Israeli settlers inside the Gaza Strip, four US and Israeli officials [told](#) *Axios*.

But on Sunday, 12 ministers and 18 lawmakers in Israel's governing coalition [gathered](#) at a conference to promote the forcible expulsion of Gaza's 2.3 million Palestinians and to build Jewish settlements in enclave.

Shortly after the start of the war in October, a document was [leaked](#) from the Israeli Ministry of Intelligence outlining a plan to expel the population of Gaza under the pretext of humanitarian concern.

Members of Israel's settler movement have for years [advocated](#) the reconquest and resettlement of Gaza. In 2005, then-Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon ordered the dismantling of the Gush Katif settlement block and the evacuation of Jewish settlers from Gaza.

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Featured image: Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, left, and Knesset Foreign Affairs and Security Committee Chairman Yuli Edelstein attend a briefing at Gallant's office in Tel Aviv, January 30, 2024. (Photo credit: Ariel Hermoni/Defense Ministry)

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