

Detailed Timeline of Events in Gaza

Late 2023 - Early 2024:

- **Ongoing:** Israel begins waging a war on Gaza's civil government and its ability to maintain law and order as part of its broader military campaign. This includes targeting members of civil branches and assassinating leaders, aiming to create a civil and humanitarian vacuum leading to chaos and lawlessness.
- **Early Months of the War:** Israeli forces raze buildings and agricultural fields to create an initial buffer zone along Gaza's borders with Israel and Egypt. This is done to eliminate Hamas tunnels and prevent attacks, but legal experts state these tactics violate international law.
- **May 2024:** Israel invades Rafah and closes the Rafah crossing, the only avenue for aid entry into Gaza at the time. Rafah is systematically demolished and cleared of inhabitants between May and the end of the year.
- **May - December 2024:** Looting and banditry under the watch of the Israeli army become endemic, particularly in the Rafah area. Gangs, including one led by Yasser Abu Shabab, are reported to be operating with potential Israeli army protection or benevolence.
- **November 2024:** Gaza security forces form a special unit called the "Arrow Unit" to combat criminal gangs involved in looting.
- **November 19, 2024:** The Arrow Unit announces an ambush of Abu Shabab's group, claiming to have killed at least 20 members, including his brother Fathi. Later reports indicate Abu Shabab survived.
- **December 2024:** A man identifies the leader of a small looting group near the Karam Abu Salem crossing as being in constant phone contact with someone who directed him, suggesting coordination with the Israeli army.

January - Mid-March 2025:

- **Mid-January 2025:** Israel agrees to a ceasefire with Hamas.
- **Mid-January - Mid-March 2025:** During the ceasefire, Gaza's civil government and police force recuperate and attempt to restore order to areas previously dominated by anarchy. Security services regain control in many areas, including Khan Younis, Rafah, and Gaza City.

- **January 20, 2025:** Bahjat Abu Sultan, head of Gaza's Security Service, is photographed on a field visit in Gaza City, highlighting the reassertion of civil control during the ceasefire.
- **February 16, 2025:** Humanitarian aid trucks continue to enter Gaza Strip and proceed towards distribution centers following the ceasefire.
- **March 2, 2025:** Israel imposes a total siege on Gaza, preventing food, fuel, aid, and commercial goods from entering.
- **March 9, 2025:** Palestinian children are pictured waiting to receive food cooked by a charity kitchen in Khan Younis during Ramadan.

Mid-March 2025 - Present:

- **March 18, 2025:** Israel shatters the ceasefire with a wave of strikes and resumes its military campaign in Gaza. Israeli troops now occupy swaths of Gaza. This date marks the beginning of a period of intensified blockade and displacement.
- **March 18, 2025:** Bahjat Abu Sultan, head of Gaza's Security Service, is assassinated alongside several Gaza government leaders. This is seen as part of Israel's renewed campaign to target the civil government.
- **Since March 18, 2025:** IDF operations have killed more than 2,400 Palestinians and injured over 6,400, according to the Gaza Health Ministry. An estimated 500,000 people have been displaced since this date.
- **Over the Past Two Months (since March 2):** Mass hunger grips Gaza due to Israel's severe restrictions on aid entry. WFP depletes food stocks for community kitchens and closes bakeries.
- **Late March 2025:** Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz states he has instructed the IDF to seize Palestinian territory permanently if hostages are not released, aiming to expand security zones and potentially annex territory.
- **April 2025:** WFP exhausts food parcels delivered directly to families.
- **Late April 2025:** Lawmaker Moshe Saada publicly states, "Yes, I'll starve Gazans, yes, this is our obligation."
- **Late April 2025:** Donald Trump tells reporters he has pushed Netanyahu to resume aid to Gazan civilians, stating the U.S. will help with food and medicine.

- **April 30, 2025:** A Washington Post report highlights the ongoing hunger crisis, stating residents are surviving on one meal a day or less, and the siege is nearing two months with no aid entering.
- **May 1, 2025:** The head of the Madhoun clan in Gaza calls for the formation of a unified national leadership led by various community figures to confront lawlessness, suggesting an alternative to government committees.
- **May 1, 2025:** The head of the al-Ghoul clan condemns looting, stating it's designed to sow chaos and mutiny in line with Israeli policy.
- **May 1, 2025:** A Washington Post report details how Israel has redrawn the Gaza map, limiting Palestinians to about a third of the enclave by declaring roughly 70% as either a military "red zone" or under evacuation orders. Israel has also enlarged its "security zone" along the borders.
- **May 2, 2025:** Israeli airstrikes kill police officers and civilians protecting markets and food warehouses in Gaza City. One officer killed is identified as As'ad Yahya Kafarneh, reportedly in charge of a patrol confronting gangs collaborating with the Israeli occupation.
- **May 3, 2025:** Gaza's Interior Ministry states it will continue to pursue outlaws. Reuters reports Hamas has executed several looters accused of collaborating with Israel. Videos circulate online purporting to show members of the Arrow Unit beating suspected collaborators and a man "confessing" and "repenting." Statements purportedly from the Arrow Unit claim field executions of collaborators will be shown in coming days.
- **May 4, 2025:** Ismail Thawabta, head of the Gaza Media Office, claims the security situation is generally under control despite limited attempts by lawless groups, and that criminal gangs are being dealt with.
- **May 5, 2025:** Yemen's Houthis launch a missile that falls near Ben Gurion Airport, injuring six and disrupting air traffic. Netanyahu promises retaliation.
- **May 5, 2025:** Israel's security cabinet unanimously approves a plan to expand military operations in Gaza, including the occupation of territory and sustaining it, shifting from raid-based operations. The plan was presented by the IDF chief of staff. Tens of thousands of reservists are planned to be mobilized.
- **May 5, 2025:** Israel's security cabinet also ratifies a plan to overhaul food distribution in Gaza, involving Israel taking control, sharply reducing aid, establishing hubs, and using private U.S. contractors for security, on the condition

Hamas cannot access supplies. National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir is the sole dissenter.

- **May 5, 2025:** Axios reports Israel's Security Cabinet approved a plan to reoccupy and eventually flatten all of Gaza if a new hostage-and-ceasefire deal isn't reached soon.
- **May 5, 2025:** U.N. agencies and other aid groups working in Gaza issue a joint statement calling Israel's aid distribution plan "dangerous" and refusing to participate in schemes that don't adhere to humanitarian principles.
- **May 6, 2025:** UK Foreign Office minister Hamish Falconer states the UK Government "strongly" opposes Israel's plans to expand military operations in Gaza, warning of more civilian deaths and greater risk to hostages. He urges a return to negotiations.
- **May 6, 2025:** Mondoweiss reports on Israel's strategy of backing armed looters to create a power vacuum and sow chaos, and killing those who attempt to stop them. It highlights the targeting of the civil government and the rise of banditry.
- **May 7, 2025:** Reuters reports that aid agencies have criticized Israeli plans to take over aid distribution and use private companies, stating the military has prevented supplies from entering for two months. The blockade will continue until a large-scale evacuation to a designated area near Rafah.
- **May 7, 2025:** The UN humanitarian agency OCHA says the Israeli aid plan is "the opposite of what is needed." Norwegian Refugee Council Secretary General Jan Egeland calls the plan insufficient and a breach of humanitarian principles.
- **May 7, 2025:** Haaretz publishes an account from a Palestinian father in Gaza describing the severe hunger, reliance on scarce resources, and the belief that the suffering does not affect Hamas and is instead targeting civilians. He states Gaza is unlivable.
- **Ongoing:** The IPC begins another evaluation of food insecurity and acute malnutrition in Gaza.
- **Ongoing:** The U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Turk, warns the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza is in danger of "reaching a new unseen level."

Cast of Characters

Principle People Mentioned in the Sources:

- **Benjamin Netanyahu:** Prime Minister of Israel. He is mentioned as having his Security Cabinet approve the plans to expand military operations, occupy territory, and overhaul aid distribution in Gaza. He is described as a fugitive from the International Criminal Court for alleged war crimes related to starving the civilian population.
- **Itamar Ben Gvir:** Israel's National Security Minister. A far-right minister who was the sole dissenter against the aid distribution plan in the Security Cabinet meeting, arguing Israel should not provide humanitarian aid. He resigned from the government during the ceasefire and returned after it ended. He supports the annexation of Gaza.
- **Bezalel Smotrich:** Israel's Finance Minister. A hardliner and settler leader who has openly expressed a desire to see the Palestinian population moved out of Gaza and supports a full occupation and annexation of the territory. He stated there will be "no retreat from the territories we have conquered, not even in exchange for hostages."
- **Gideon Saar:** Israel's Foreign Minister. He is quoted as saying that if Hamas continues to steal aid and profit from it, the war will continue forever. He also suggests cutting off aid is the best way to pressure Hamas to release hostages.
- **Israel Katz:** Israeli Defense Minister. He instructed the IDF in March to seize Palestinian territory permanently if hostages were not released and to expand security zones.
- **Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir:** IDF Chief of Staff. He presented the plan for expanded operations and occupation to the security cabinet. He also announced the call-up of tens of thousands of reservists. He reportedly resisted the IDF taking on responsibility for direct aid distribution earlier.
- **Antoine Renard:** Country Director for the World Food Programme (WFP). He is mentioned as stating WFP had depleted its food stocks for community kitchens and closed bakeries in Gaza due to the blockade.
- **Mohammed Murtaja:** A 25-year-old resident of Gaza City. He describes living with many relatives and eating once daily at most due to the lack of food.

- **Narmeen Abu Nasr:** A mother of four in the Jabalya refugee camp. She states Israel is "practicing a policy of starvation" and is struggling to feed herself and breastfeed her baby.
- **Ibrahim Abu Shawareb:** A 37-year-old resident staying in Khan Younis. He describes making "war kebabs" from soaked chickpeas and frying them, highlighting the desperate food situation.
- **Bahjat Abu Sultan:** Head of Gaza's Security Service. He is shown in photos and mentioned as being assassinated alongside other Gaza government leaders on March 18, 2025. His assassination is seen as part of Israel's targeting of the civil government.
- **Ismail Thawabta:** Head of the Government Media Office in Gaza. He is quoted numerous times asserting that looting gangs are acting on directives from Israeli forces, are armed and semi-organized, and that security forces are working to uncover these networks. He also claims the security situation is generally under control despite challenges.
- **Abu Udai:** Head of the Information Security Department of a government security agency in Gaza City. He states Israel wants to destroy Gaza's entire civil infrastructure and that government personnel feel in constant danger. He was the target of assassination attempts that killed his wife and two sons.
- **Yasser Abu Shabab:** Leader of a prominent and notorious criminal gang in the Rafah area involved in looting aid convoys. He was the object of international media interest and was targeted by the Arrow Unit, but reportedly survived the assassination attempt.
- **Shadi Soufi:** Another prominent gang leader identified as wreaking havoc on aid convoys in Gaza.
- **Khuza'a:** (Alias) A 23-year-old man who briefly worked with a smaller looting group near the Karam Abu Salem crossing. He describes the leader being in contact with someone who directed the group, suggesting coordination with the Israeli army.
- **Abu Malek:** Director of a police station in Gaza City. He describes the security services confronting looting groups and regaining control during the ceasefire, but that the resumption of war brought chaos back. He mentions police trying to organize popular emergency committees.

- **Jameson Govoni:** Head of UG Solutions, a private U.S. security contractor that is to subcontract on-the-ground security operations for the Israeli aid distribution hubs. A former Green Beret who served in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- **Donald Trump:** Former U.S. President. Mentioned as having leverage over Israel and pushing Netanyahu to resume aid to Gazan civilians. He is scheduled to visit Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE. Some Israeli officials believe he would not object to their plans for occupation.
- **António Guterres:** United Nations Secretary-General. His office condemned Israel's cabinet ministers' vote to capture the entire Gaza Strip.
- **Hamish Falconer:** UK Foreign Office Minister. He stated the UK Government "strongly" opposes Israel's plans to expand military operations in Gaza and warned of increased civilian deaths and risk to hostages. He urged a return to negotiations.
- **Edan Alexander:** An American hostage believed to still be alive inside Gaza. His case is mentioned by a Trump administration spokesman as a reason for consequences against Hamas.
- **Ofer Shelah:** A former lawmaker and researcher at the Institute for National Security Studies in Tel Aviv. He warns that the new Israeli plan could lead to a de facto occupation of Gaza with significant consequences.
- **Yair Golan:** Leader of the left-leaning Democrats party and a retired IDF general. He warns that the new Israeli strategy is paving the way for the annexation of Gaza and will cost lives.
- **Adil Haque:** Professor of international law at Rutgers University. He states Israel's aid distribution plan would almost certainly not comply with international law.
- **Bushra Khalidi:** West Bank policy lead for Oxfam. She condemns Israel's aid distribution plan as treating civilians as prisoners and being a form of coercion.

Other Individuals Mentioned:

- **Mike Allen:** Author of the Axios article "1 big thing: Israel threatens to flatten Gaza".
- **Barak Ravid:** Axios reporter who reported on Israel's Security Cabinet plan.
- **Corey Scher and Jamon Van Den Hoek:** From Oregon State University's Conflict Ecology lab, provided analysis of satellite data.
- **Erin Davis:** From Axios Visuals, created the map.

- **James Mackenzie and Emma Farge:** Reuters reporters of the article "Aid agencies slam Israeli plans for Gaza aid distribution".
- **Bernadette Baum:** Editor of the Reuters article.
- **Hatem Khaled:** Reuters photographer who took the photo of Palestinian children in Khan Younis.
- **Miriam Berger and Tim Carman:** Washington Post reporters of the article "Gazans are again going hungry as Israel's total siege nears two months".
- **Lior Soroka, Annabelle Timsit, Gerry Shih, Alon Rom and Claire Parker:** Washington Post reporters of the article "Israel approves plan to expand Gaza war, including 'occupation' of territory".
- **Hadi Daoud:** APA Images photographer.
- **Abubaker Abed:** Drop Site contributor who cited local reports on looting.
- **Faris Giacaman:** Mondoweiss' Palestine Editorial Director and co-author of the article on looting.
- **Tareq S. Hajjaj:** Journalist and co-author of the Mondoweiss article on looting.
- **Júlia Ledur:** Washington Post reporter of the article "Israel redraws Gaza map, limiting Palestinians to a third of the enclave".
- **Yaakov Garb:** From Ben-Gurion University, provided data on restricted buffer zones.
- **Ahmed:** (Alias) A Palestinian father in Gaza who provides testimony about the hunger and living conditions in Haaretz.
- **Nir Hasson:** Haaretz reporter who wrote the article featuring Ahmed.
- **Rhiannon James and Richard Wheeler:** PA Political Staff reporters of the article "UK strongly opposes expansion of Israeli operations in Gaza, minister says".
- **Ze'ev Eklín:** Prominent Knesset lawmaker quoted in the Common Dreams article.
- **Anouar El Anouni:** European Union spokesperson.
- **Yanis Varoufakis:** Former Greek Finance Minister.
- **Brian Hughes:** Spokesman for Trump's National Security Council.
- **Michael Milshtein:** Former adviser on Palestinian affairs to the Israeli military.