

Gaza Conflict and Humanitarian Crisis: Study Guide

Quiz

1. What was the primary outcome of Israel's Security Cabinet meeting regarding Gaza on May 5, 2025, according to Mike Allen's report?
2. Why have aid agencies criticized Israeli plans for aid distribution in Gaza, as reported by Mackenzie and Farge?
3. According to Amjad al-Shawa, director of PNGO, what immediate impact did the closure of community kitchens and WCK decision have on food availability in Gaza?
4. How has the Israeli government's stated goal for the war in Gaza evolved, according to news reports from early May 2025?
5. Describe the living conditions and food situation in Gaza as reported by residents like Mohammed Murtaja and Ibrahim Abu Shawareb.
6. What role has Israel been accused of playing in the increase of looting and lawlessness in Gaza, according to reporting by Giacaman and Hajjaj?
7. What specific details were revealed about the proposed Israeli plan for aid distribution in Gaza, including the number of trucks and security arrangements?
8. What is "Gideon's Chariots," and what does the plan entail according to Israeli officials?
9. What is the "Rafah strategy" and what has it involved, as described in the source material?
10. According to the source material, what is one significant internal Israeli obstacle to the full implementation of their expanded war plans in Gaza?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The Israeli Security Cabinet approved a plan to reoccupy and potentially flatten all of Gaza if a new hostage-and-ceasefire deal is not reached soon.
2. Aid agencies have criticized Israeli plans to take over aid distribution because they believe it disregards the complexity of the environment, strips protection from aid deliveries, and appears designed to reinforce control over life-sustaining items as a pressure tactic.

3. According to Amjad al-Shawa, the closure of most communal kitchens and the WCK decision would cause a drop of between 400,000 to 500,000 free meals per day for Gaza's population.
4. News reports from early May 2025 indicate a shift from raid-based operations to the occupation of territory and sustaining it, with the primary goal being defeating Hamas, and the release of Israeli captives becoming a secondary goal.
5. Residents report mass hunger, relying on one meal a day or less, difficulty finding food and water, and resorting to eating substandard or contaminated food, such as flour with mites and sand or "war kebabs" made from soaked chickpeas.
6. Israel has been accused of actively fomenting and possibly arming armed gangs to loot food supplies and sow chaos, while also targeting and killing those who attempt to stop the robberies, including police officers and community volunteers.
7. The plan involved allowing only about 60 trucks of aid per day, inspected by the IDF, traveling to Israel-designated distribution hubs in the south under the protection of U.S. security contractors, with facial recognition technology used to identify visitors.
8. "Gideon's Chariots" is the codename for Israel's approved plan to expand military operations in Gaza, involving invading with multiple divisions, gradually occupying and holding most of the strip, flattening buildings, destroying tunnels, and displacing nearly 2 million Palestinians to the Rafah area.
9. The "Rafah strategy" involves isolating the city, wiping out civilian infrastructure by demolishing or detonating residential blocks, reducing the city to rubble, and making it part of an expanded militarized buffer zone, with the goal of making life impossible for Palestinians and potentially forcing their transfer out of Gaza.
10. One significant internal obstacle mentioned is the lack of sufficient active manpower in the Israeli army's ranks to achieve all of the cabinet's ambitions for occupying and controlling Gaza.

Essay Format Questions

1. Analyze the competing narratives presented in the source material regarding the humanitarian situation in Gaza, specifically focusing on the reasons for aid shortages and who is held responsible by different actors (Israeli government, aid agencies, Gazan residents, international observers).

2. Discuss the implications of Israel's reported plans for permanent occupation and control over parts of Gaza, including the potential impact on the Palestinian population, international law, and future peace prospects.
3. Evaluate the claims made in the source material regarding Israel's alleged role in fostering lawlessness and looting in Gaza. How do different sources support or refute this claim, and what might be the potential motivations or consequences of such a strategy?
4. Examine the proposed Israeli plan for aid distribution in Gaza. What are its key features, criticisms from aid agencies and international bodies, and how does it potentially align with or diverge from international humanitarian principles?
5. Discuss the broader political context surrounding the expanded Israeli plans for Gaza, including the role of far-right Israeli ministers, the influence of U.S. policy (including potential interactions with a possible Trump visit), and the reactions of regional and international actors.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Gaza Strip:** A small self-governing Palestinian territory on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea.
- **Hamas:** A Palestinian Sunni-Islamist fundamentalist organization that has governed the Gaza Strip since 2007.
- **Ceasefire:** A temporary suspension of fighting in a war.
- **Hostages:** Individuals held captive, particularly those taken during the October 7, 2023 attack on Israel.
- **Humanitarian Aid:** Assistance and supplies provided to people in need, especially during a crisis or disaster.
- **Aid Agencies:** Organizations, often international and non-governmental, dedicated to providing humanitarian assistance.
- **PNGO (Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network):** A network of Palestinian NGOs operating in the Palestinian territories.
- **WCK (World Central Kitchen):** An international non-profit organization that provides meals in the wake of natural disasters and other crises.
- **IPC (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification):** A global standard for classifying food insecurity and malnutrition.

- **Occupation:** The control and governance of a territory by a hostile power.
- **Forced Displacement:** The involuntary movement of people from their homes or communities.
- **International Law:** A system of treaties and agreements between nations that governs how they interact with other nations, citizens, and businesses.
- **Humanitarian Principles:** Fundamental guidelines for humanitarian action, including humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence.
- **Civilian Infrastructure:** Essential facilities and systems serving the general population, such as housing, hospitals, schools, and utilities.
- **Buffer Zone:** A neutral area serving to separate opposing forces or groups.
- **Annexation:** The act of incorporating a territory into an existing political entity.
- **Genocide:** The deliberate killing of a large number of people from a particular nation or ethnic group with the aim of destroying that nation or group.
- **Looting:** The act of stealing goods, typically during a war or riot.
- **Power Vacuum:** A situation in which someone has lost control of something and no one has replaced them, resulting in disorder.
- **Collaborators:** People who cooperate traitorously with an enemy.
- **Moral Culpability:** Responsibility for wrongdoing.
- **Antisemitism:** Hostility to or prejudice against Jewish people.
- **Zionism:** A nationalist movement that espouses the establishment of and support for a homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine/the Land of Israel.
- **Ethnic Cleansing:** The expulsion or killing of members of an unwanted ethnic or religious group in a society.