

# Gazans Reject U.S.-Israeli Aid Distribution Plan, Call for Enhanced UN Role

GAZA (Dispatches) – A joint U.S.-Israeli initiative to distribute humanitarian aid in the Gaza Strip has triggered strong backlash from Gazans, who say the plan undermines their dignity and sidelines established international relief channels.

Palestinians displaced by months of conflict voiced deep mistrust of the effort, accusing Washington and Tel Aviv of politicizing aid delivery amid a worsening humanitarian crisis.

“Since we were forced to flee south at the start of the war, we’ve endured hunger, deprivation, and fear,” said Mohammed al-Ajrani, a displaced resident of Gaza City. “People here have little trust in any initiative involving the same actors they hold responsible for their suffering.”

“What we want is aid that preserves our dignity,” he told Xinhua. “International institutions like the United Nations have treated us with humanity. We don’t want conditional aid tied to political or military oversight.”



*Palestinians receive free food from a food distribution center in Gaza City, on May 9, 2025.*

Similar sentiments were echoed by Salah al-Ja’farawi, also from Gaza City. “After 18 years of blockade and over 19 months of war, people will not accept aid that comes at the expense of their dignity,” he said. “Emergency help is one thing, but if the long-term plan is to erode our rights, it will not be accepted.”

The aid plan, announced this week by U.S. Ambassador to the occupied territories Mike Huckabee,

aims to provide food to roughly 1.2 million people -- about 60 percent of Gaza’s population -- through four distribution centers inside the enclave. The operation will be managed by a newly established private entity, the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, and secured by U.S. contractors, with the Israeli military guarding the perimeter.

Speaking at a briefing in Al-Quds on Friday, Huckabee said the objective was to prevent Hamas from

diverting aid, reiterating longstanding Israeli claims that the group exploits humanitarian supplies.

But in Gaza, many view the plan as an extension of foreign control. Rami al-Najjar, a local humanitarian worker, said aid should be delivered through neutral channels.

“People trust international organizations to distribute aid professionally, without political agendas,” he said. “Introducing military actors into this process sends the wrong message.”

The United Nations and other humanitarian agencies have repeatedly warned against politicizing aid and confirmed that, under existing mechanisms, most supplies have reached civilians despite logistical challenges.

The situation in Gaza has sharply deteriorated in recent months. In March, Israel tightened its blockade, restricting shipments of food, medicine, and fuel. Aid agencies report worsening food insecurity, with rising malnutrition rates, particularly among women and children.

## Freed Pro-Palestinian Turkish Student in U.S. Says Will Continue to Pursue Case

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – A Turkish doctoral student at Tufts University in the United States has returned to Boston after spending more than six weeks in an immigration detention center in Louisiana in what her lawyers call a politically motivated crackdown on free speech.

Upon arrival at Boston Logan International Airport, Rumeysa Ozturk told reporters on Saturday that she was excited to get back to her studies during what has been a “very difficult” period.

“In the last 45 days, I lost both my freedom and also my education during a crucial time for my doctoral studies,” she said. “But I am so grateful for all the

support, kindness and care.”

A federal judge on Friday ordered her release pending a final decision on her claim that she was illegally detained.

Ozturk, 30, was detained on March 25 when immigration officials arrested her in Massachusetts, revoked her student visa and transferred her to the detention facility in Louisiana.

Supporters believe Ozturk, a Fulbright scholar from Turkey, was targeted for having co-written an opinion article in her student newspaper, calling on Tufts University to acknowledge the Zionist regime’s war on Gaza as a genocide.

A genocide case against the occupying

regime is under way at the International Court of Justice. Last week, the former EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell accused the regime of committing genocide.

Ozturk was joined by her lawyers and two of Massachusetts’s Democratic members of Congress, Senator Edward Markey and Representative Ayanna Pressley.

“Today is a tremendous day as we welcome you back, Rumeysa,” Markey said. “You have made millions and millions of people across our country so proud of the way you have fought.”

Ozturk’s lawyers say her visa was re-

voked without notice and she was not allowed to contact legal counsel for more than a day after her arrest.

Appearing in court via video, Ozturk spoke of her deteriorating health, including severe asthma attacks in detention, and her hopes of continuing her doctoral research on children and social media.

U.S. District Judge William Sessions granted Ozturk bail, saying she presented no flight risk or danger to the public. He found that her claim of unlawful detention raised serious constitutional questions, including potential violations of her rights to free speech and due process.

## Zionist Regime Officers Admit Assault on Gaza ‘Kills Captives’

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – The Zionist regime has not prioritized the safe return of captives amid its ongoing war on Palestinians in Gaza, a new investigation by Israeli news outlet Ynet has revealed.

According to the report, both the regime and the military are fully aware that army attacks pose a grave risk to the captives and have, in fact, already led to fatalities.

“The maneuver kills captives, not theoretically, it actually kills them,” a security source told Ynet.

The source cited a specific incident in November 2023 as an example, in which an Israeli airstrike killed three Israeli captives along with a senior Hamas military commander, Ahmed Ghandour.

“That’s what happens when you’re

pursuing two conflicting objectives at the same time,” said the source, who holds a senior position in Israeli intelligence.

He stated that his main task within intelligence had become “to save the captives, mainly from ourselves”, referring to the extreme danger Israeli military operations are believed to pose to the hostages’ lives.

Prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, war minister Israel Katz and top military officials have repeatedly insisted that continued military pressure is the only viable strategy to secure the release of captives, 59 of whom are still being held in Gaza.

“Ask any officer in the army today what the current war plan entails, beyond vague talk of ‘pressure’ to bring

back the captives,” the source said. “We’ve been trying that for 19 months. It doesn’t work.”

The source also described the planned expanded ground invasion as offering Hamas “two options: release the captives and we will kill you, or don’t release them and we will still kill you. Of course, Hamas chooses the second option”.

Haaretz reported earlier this week that securing the release of captives ranked at the bottom of six stated objectives for the Zionist regime’s upcoming expanded military assault in Gaza, code-named “Gideon’s Chariots”.

The primary goals of the operation reportedly include defeating Hamas, establishing operational control over Gaza, demilitarizing the Palestinian en-

clave, dismantling Hamas governance infrastructure and “managing and mobilizing” the civilian population - with captive recovery coming last.

According to the Ynet report, the return of the captive has not featured among the regime’s central military objectives since the war began, despite public declarations that both defeating Hamas and rescuing the captives were official aims.

“A few days after the attack, [Hamas leader] Yahya Sinwar offered to release the children, women and the elderly,” the Ynet investigation stated.

However, “Israel rushed to invade Gaza and no one thought about the hostages”, a security source told the outlet, criticising the government’s early decision-making.

## Second Round of Municipal, Local Elections Held in Northern Lebanon

BEIRUT (Xinhua) – The second round of Lebanon’s municipal and local elections began on Sunday in the governorates of Akkar and North Lebanon, following the first round held on May 4 in the Mount Lebanon Governorate.

Voting took place under tight security enforced by the Lebanese Army and Internal Security Forces, with polling stations open from 7:00 a.m. local time (0400 GMT) until 7:00 p.m. local time.

According to the state-run National News Agency, 3,569 candidates submitted nominations for 134 municipal and 210 local positions in Akkar. Meanwhile, 3,569 candidates submitted nominations for 153 municipal and 462 local positions in North Lebanon, according to unofficial statistical

reports.

Overseeing the launch of the second round by visiting the Internal Security Forces’ operations room, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun said that successful elections “will send a positive message abroad regarding the state’s commitment to holding all constitutional deadlines on time.”

He also stressed the need to “combat bribery and violations swiftly and decisively,” highlighting the media’s role in helping expose irregularities.

Interior and Municipalities Minister Ahmad al-Hajjar told reporters in the operations room that the electoral process was launched “smoothly and calmly,” with no security incidents having been reported.

“A bribery case was detected by the State Security agency and is currently under judicial investigation,” he said.

Lebanon’s municipal and local elections, the first such elections in nine years after several postponements due to logistical, administrative, economic and security challenges, are scheduled to be held in four rounds, taking place every Sunday throughout May. The third round will take place in the governorates of Beirut, Bekaa, and Baalbek-Hermel, and the fourth in the South Governorate as well as the Nabatieh Governorate.

The elections follow a three-year extension of the municipal and local councils’ mandates beyond their legal terms.

## Fourth... (Continued From Page One)

major foreign tour next week, and Araghchi just back from Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

Omani Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi said the talks on Sunday “included useful and original ideas reflecting a shared wish to reach an honorable agreement”.

Yousuf Al Bulushi, chairman of the Muscat Policy Council think tank, said that a breakthrough “will take quite some time, but I’m optimistic”.

Washington’s chief negotiator Steve Witkoff said in a Friday interview that Iran’s “enrichment facilities have to be dismantled”.

“That’s our red line. No enrichment,” he told U.S. right-wing outlet Breitbart News, after initially suggesting flexibility on Tehran maintaining low-level enrichment of uranium for civilian purposes.

Araghchi has repeatedly defended Iran’s right to enrich uranium. Before departing for Muscat on Sunday, the minister touched on the American side’s contradictory statements.

“We are witnessing contradictions both inside and outside the negotiation room, or in the media. The positions of the other side are constantly changing and shifting, which is one of the problems of the negotiation,” he said.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran, unlike the other side, has known and principled positions. We have moved in a completely straight line, and our positions are completely clear,” he said.

Iran adhered to the 2015 nuclear agreement with world powers for a year after Washington’s withdrawal, before beginning to roll back its compliance.

Since returning to office in January, Trump has revived his “maximum pressure” approach against Tehran, while backing nuclear diplomacy but warning of potential military action if it fails.

Meanwhile, European governments are weighing whether to trigger the “snapback” mechanism under the 2015 deal, which would reinstate UN sanctions -- an option that expires in October.

Araghchi, in an article published on Sunday by French weekly Le Point, warned against a “strategy of confrontation”.

On Sunday, he said, “If the intention is to ensure that Iran will not have nuclear weapons, this is completely achievable, and an agreement to this end is certainly attainable.

“But if they have unusual and unrealistic demands that are not workable, it is natural that the negotiations will face difficulties.”

## Alawites... (Continued From Page One)

chilling wave of mysterious kidnappings of young women, predominantly from the Alawite community.

Dozens of women, primarily from the Alawite religious sect, have been abducted and taken to live as sex slaves in Idlib governorate, the traditional HTS stronghold, by armed factions affiliated with the new regime in Syria.

## NBC ... (Continued From Page One)

NBC News said twice in just this past week alone, the U.S. president made public comments that “rankled Netanyahu.”

Netanyahu, it said, was particularly upset when Trump said on May 7 that he had yet to decide whether Iran would be allowed to enrich uranium under a possible new deal.

## Armed ... (Continued From Page One)

of the Persian Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz, and the Oman Sea, Bagheri emphasized the importance of operational assessments in the region.

He stressed the critical role of the Navy and the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) in safeguarding territorial and international waters, as well as national resources.

“Our armed forces are in a state of full readiness to deal with any situation,” Bagheri told commanders at the Army’s First Naval Region, underscoring the necessity of reviewing operational preparedness and ensuring the military can effectively implement defense strategies.

Army Commander Brigadier General Abdolrahim Mousavi and Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani accompanied Bagheri during the visit.

## Araghchi... (Continued From Page 2)

As the fourth round of indirect talks between Iran and the United States was set to begin the following day, Araghchi said, “We will continue our discussions with the United States — and concurrently with Europe, Russia, and China — in good faith.”

However, he made it clear that if the goal of these discussions was to ensure that Iran was not pursuing nuclear weapons, that objective had already been achieved.

But if the aim was to deny Iran its legitimate nuclear rights and impose unrealistic demands, the Islamic Republic would not yield to it, he added. “The Islamic Republic of Iran will never, under any circumstances, surrender any of the legitimate rights of the proud Iranian nation,” Araghchi stressed.

Araghchi also stressed the importance of regional convergence as the path forward for Western Asian nations.

He called for deeper trust-building and mutual understanding, advocating for cooperative initiatives in areas like cultural exchange, trade, and tourism.

According to Araghchi, prosperity in the region depends not on the rise of dominant nations, but on the success of a strong region as a whole.