

Opinion **The FT View**

## Netanyahu's disastrous plan to take control of Gaza

A small window exists for Israel's allies to dissuade it from further escalation

**THE EDITORIAL BOARD**



The Israel Defense Forces have been ordered to prepare to take control of Gaza City, the strip's shattered capital © Bashar Taleb/AFP/Getty Images

## The editorial board

Published AUG 10 2025

---

For weeks, foreign leaders have been raising the pressure on Benjamin Netanyahu to end his catastrophic war in Gaza. Instead, Israel's prime minister has devised a new plan that would inflict yet more death and destruction on the 2.1mn Palestinians inside the besieged strip. A day after Netanyahu signalled his intent to fully take over the enclave, his security cabinet ordered the army to prepare to [take control](#) of Gaza City, its shattered capital.

This would mean more civilians being killed and hundreds of thousands of Palestinians once more being forcibly displaced, even as a man-made famine stalks the strip. And it would only be the beginning. The next targets are likely to be urban areas in central Gaza where Israeli troops have not yet deployed at scale as Hamas is believed to be holding Israeli hostages there.

By endorsing the plan, Netanyahu is in effect putting two fingers up to a world increasingly appalled by Israel's actions and the suffering it is causing in [Gaza](#). He is

---

also ignoring the advice of his [military chiefs](#), and the wishes of the anguished hostage families and the majority of Israelis. Many have finally begun to realise the harm the [war](#) is doing to their country — diplomatically, economically and socially.

Expanding the offensive — again — would be disastrous for Israel, as well as the Palestinians. It would imperil the remaining 20 living hostages Hamas seized during its abhorrent October 7, 2023 attack, who are also [starving](#) and enduring a hellish existence. It would mean mobilising thousands of reservists, straining a weary military and putting more Israeli lives at stake. And it would further erode Israel's moral standing. The Jewish state long ago lost any justification for pursuing its offensive in retaliation to Hamas's attack, with evidence of war crimes mounting and tens of thousands of Palestinians killed.

[Netanyahu](#) insists his mission is “total victory” over Hamas: freeing the hostages, demilitarising Gaza, ensuring Israeli control over the strip and, eventually, establishing a “civilian administration” that excludes the militant group and the Palestinian Authority, the western-backed body that administers parts of the occupied West Bank. But he has never presented a coherent plan beyond the destruction of the strip and forcibly displacing Palestinians. Before the latest expansion was announced, almost 90 per cent of Gaza was already under Israeli evacuation orders or inside military zones.

Nor has Netanyahu ever seriously considered a potential alternative. The UK, France and Arab states have been formulating a plan that envisages a committee of Palestinian technocrats, backed by the PA, governing Gaza, with security overseen by local police and PA personnel. They have mooted an international “stabilisation” force in the strip. Importantly, Arab states have finally joined their European allies in publicly acknowledging that Hamas needs to relinquish power and be disarmed.

The plan is not perfect and it may not be workable. But it is far better than the alternative Netanyahu is bent on pursuing. He has repeatedly resisted US and Arab efforts to secure a permanent ceasefire and the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza

---

— even though Hamas's military structure has been decimated and its leaders killed. Instead Netanyahu, on trial for corruption and beholden to extremists in his ruling coalition, puts his own political interests before the nation's.

Donald Trump is the one man with the political heft to hold Netanyahu to account. But while the US president appears to have finally awoken to the starvation caused by Israel's weaponisation of aid, he is either unwilling or unable to force Netanyahu to end the war. Yet he is not only failing the Palestinians, but Israel as well. There is a narrow window to prevent the Israeli leader's latest calamitous scheme becoming reality. Trump, and Israel's other [allies](#), must act now to prevent it.

---

[Copyright](#) The Financial Times Limited 2025. All rights reserved.

---

### **Follow the topics in this article**

The editorial board

The FT View

Middle Eastern politics & society

Israel-Hamas war

Israel Defense Forces