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European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

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10.06.2025

## Gaza's 'Humanitarian' Façade: A Deceptive Ploy Unraveled



Image by Emad El Byed.

Just one day before the so-called Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) began operating officially inside the Gaza Strip, its executive director, Jake Wood, resigned.

The text of his resignation statement underscored what many had already suspected: GHF is not a humanitarian endeavor, but the latest scam by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to control the Gaza Strip, after 600 days of war and genocide.

“It is clear that it is not possible to implement this plan while also strictly adhering to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence,” Wood said in the statement, which was cited by CNN and other media.

This begs the question: why had that realization become ‘clear’ to Wood, even though the aid operation was not yet in effect? The rest of the statement offers some explanation, suggesting that the American contractor may not have known the extent of the Israeli ploy until later, but

knew that a disaster was unfolding – the kind that would surely require investigating and, possibly, accountability.

In fact, an investigation by Swiss authorities had already begun. The US news network, CBS, looked into the matter, reporting on May 29 that GHF originally applied for registration in Geneva on January 31 and was officially registered on February 12. However, in no time, Swiss authorities began noticing repeated violations, including that the Swiss branch of GHF is “currently not fulfilling various legal obligations”.

In its original application, GHF “pursues exclusively charitable philanthropic objectives for the benefit of the people.” Strangely, the entity that promised to provide “material, psychological or health” services to famine-stricken Gazans, found it necessary to employ 300 “heavily armed” American contractors, with “as much ammunition as they can carry,” CBS reported.

The ‘psychological’ support in particular was the most ironic, as desperate Gazans were corralled, on May 27, into cages under extremely high temperatures, only to be given tiny amounts of food that, according to Rami Abdu, head of the Geneva-based Euro-Med Monitor, were in fact stolen from a US-based charitable organization known as Rahma Worldwide.

Following the CBS news report, among others, and following several days of chaos and violence in Gaza, where at least 49 Palestinians were killed and over 300 wounded by those who promised to give aid and comfort, the Israeli newspaper Haaretz revealed that the funding for the operation is coming directly from Israel.

Prominent Israeli politician and Knesset member Avigdor Lieberman went even further, claiming that the money, estimated by the Washington Post to be \$100 million, “is coming from the Mossad and the Defense Ministry.”

But why would Israel go through all of this trouble while it can, at no financial cost, simply allow the massive shipments of aid, reportedly rotting on the Egyptian side of the border, to enter Gaza and to stave off the famine?

In Netanyahu’s mind, the aid mechanism is part of the war. In a video message, reported by The Jerusalem Post on May 19, he described the new aid distributing points, manned jointly by GHF and the Israeli army, as “parallel to the enormous pressure” Israel is putting on the Palestinians – exemplified in Israel’s “massive (military) entrance (into Gaza)” – with the aim of “taking control of all of the Gaza” Strip.

In Netanyahu’s own words, all of this, the military-arranged aid and ongoing genocide, is “the war and victory plan.”

Of course, Palestinians and international aid groups operating in Gaza, including UN-linked aid apparatuses, were fully aware that the secretive Israel-US scheme was predicated on bad intentions. This is why they wanted to have nothing to do with it.

In Israel's thinking, any aid mechanism that would sustain the status quo that existed prior to the war and genocide starting on October 7, 2023, would be equivalent to an admission of defeat. This is precisely why Israel labored to associate the UN Palestinian refugee agency, UNRWA, with Hamas.

This included the launching of a virulent campaign against the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres himself, and other top officials and rapporteurs. On July 22, the Israeli Knesset went as far as to designate UNRWA a "terrorist organization".

Still, it may seem to be a contradiction that the likes of extremist Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich would agree to such an 'aid' scheme just days after declaring that Israel's intention is to "entirely destroy" Gaza.

However, there is no contradiction. Having failed to conquer Gaza through military force, Israel is trying to use its latest aid scheme to capitalize on the famine it has purposely engineered over the course of months.

Luring people to 'distribution points', the Israeli army is trying to concentrate the population of Gaza in areas that can be easily controlled through leveraging food, with the ultimate aim of pushing Palestinians out, in the words of Smotrich, "in great numbers to third countries."

The latest scheme is likely to fail, of course, like other such stratagems in the last 600 days. However, the inhumane and degrading treatment of Palestinians further illustrates Israel's rejection of the growing international push to end the genocide.

For Israel to stop scheming, the international community must translate its strong words into strong action and hold, not just Israel, but its own citizens involved in the GHF and other ploys, accountable for being part of the ongoing war crimes in Gaza.

JUNE 9, 2025

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