

Israeli minister calls for occupation of Gaza, asking Palestinians to leave

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Displaced Palestinians queue for water at a makeshift tent camp by the beach in Rafah near the border with Egypt in the southern Gaza Strip on January 16, 2024. (photo by AFP).

Tel Aviv, January 20 (RHC)-- Far-right Israeli minister Itamar Ben-Gvir has reiterated his call for “encouraging” Palestinians to leave the Gaza Strip, saying the regime’s occupation of the besieged enclave is the only way to restore security to Israel.

Ben-Gvir made the remarks during an interview with Israel’s Channel 13 news on Wednesday, weeks after he called for the displacement of the people of Gaza and reoccupation of the besieged territory to build new Israeli settlements. “There is no other way to restore security to Israel other than a full occupation of the Palestinian territory,” he said, adding, “Voluntary immigration of the residents of Gaza should be encouraged.”

He further criticized the Israeli cabinet for not properly supporting Israeli forces that he claimed are doing an “excellent job” in the ongoing war in Gaza. “I hope that Likud elements do not set us back in terms of achievements,” he said of the war.

In recent months, several Israeli officials have called for the occupation of Gaza as well as genocide against the Palestinian people.

Earlier this month, Amichai Eliyahu said the residents of Gaza should be left with no option but to immigrate to other countries as part of revenge measures against them in the wake of the surprise Operation Al-Aqsa Storm operation. Back in November, Eliyahu called for dropping a nuclear bomb on Gaza.

Israeli finance minister Bezalel Smotrich has also called for encouraging the “emigration” of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip in order for extremist settlers to return to the area after the war. The United Nations has already said it’s “deeply alarmed” by statements from Israeli leaders about the forced displacement of Palestinians from Gaza.

According to the UN, 85% of the population of Gaza is already internally displaced amid acute shortages of food, clean water and medicine. Most Palestinians displaced from their homeland after the Nakba (Catastrophe), when Israel proclaimed its illegal existence on May 15, 1948, have ended up in neighboring Arab states.

Arab leaders have maintained that any latter-day move aimed at forced expulsion of the Palestinians would be absolutely unacceptable.

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