

Report reveals Washington and London were aware of Israel's plan for forced transfer of Palestinians from Gaza to Egypt

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Following the ceasefire agreement tens of thousands of Palestinians, who had been displaced by the Israeli regime forces genocidal war against the Gaza Strip, return to their homes through Al-Rashid Road in Gaza City on January 27, 2025.

London, February 2 (RHC)-- Historical documents from the British National Archives have revealed that the U.S. and UK governments were informed of a clandestine Israeli plan more than 50 years ago, which aimed to facilitate the “forced transfer” of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip to northern Egypt.

According to the documents, Israelis had informed the U.S. and the UK governments of their plans to have the Palestinians resettled in Egypt after occupying Gaza, the West Bank, East Al-Quds (Jerusalem), and the Syrian Golan Heights following the 1967 Six-Day War.

U.S. President Donald Trump, who began his second term last month, has reignited controversy by reiterating his intention to “clean out” the Gaza Strip by forcibly relocating its Palestinian population to Egypt and Jordan.

On Thursday, Trump reiterated once more that Egypt and Jordan will accept his proposed plan to move Palestinians from the Gaza Strip to these countries. So far, however, both Egyptian President Abdel Fatah el-Sissi and Jordan’s King Abdullah have rejected this old plan devised by the Israelis decades ago.

The plan has been met with opposition from various quarters, including US allies and the international community, who say that such a move would constitute ethnic cleansing and could lead to further instability in the region.

In the 1967 Six-Day War, the Israeli regime forces invaded the neighboring Arab countries' territories while destroying Egypt's and Syria's air forces. That war ended with the Israeli forces gaining control of the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and Al-Quds (Jerusalem), as well as the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt.

The British records showed that its analysts estimated that when the Israeli forces occupied the Gaza Strip, there had been 200,000 refugees in the enclave from other areas of Palestine, cared for by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), and another 150,000 who were indigenous Palestinian inhabitants of the Strip. UNRWA had already been founded in 1949.

During and after the Six-Day War, the Israeli occupation forces destroyed and damaged the enclave’s economy, according to the documents. The documents said Gaza was not “economically viable due to security and social problems created by camp life and guerrilla activities that caused increasing numbers of casualties.”

During the period between 1968 and 1971, 240 Arab and Palestinian fighters were killed and 878 others were wounded, while 43 Israeli soldiers were killed and 336 wounded in Gaza, according to British documents.

At this time, the Arab League intervened, announcing its insistence on stopping Israeli forces' atrocities against Palestinian refugees in Gaza. The Arab League announced its decision to “adopt joint Arab measures to support the resistance in the Strip.”

At the same time, the British embassy in Tel Aviv monitored Israeli moves to displace thousands of Palestinians to El-Arish, located in the north of the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula, approximately 54 kilometers from the Gaza-Egypt border.

The Israelis' secret plan included the “forced transfer” of Palestinians to Egypt or other Israeli territories, in an attempt to reduce the intensity of the resistance operations against the occupation and the security

problems facing the occupation authority in the Strip, according to the documents in the archives related to the British Foreign Office.

British Ambassador to Tel Aviv, Ernest John Ward Barnes, informed his superiors in London of Israeli actions aiming at moving Palestinians from Gaza to El-Arish in January 1971. "The only questionable Israeli action from the point of view of international law seems to be the resettlement of some Gazan refugees on Egyptian territory at El Arish," Barnes said in a dispatch to his superiors in the Foreign Office.

Barnes said in the same dispatch that the Americans were also aware of the Israeli actions but they weren't willing to raise the issue with Tel Aviv. "We understand that the American Embassy here broadly shares the above analysis and have recommended to Washington that they should not take up the Israeli actions in Gaza with the Israel government in any official way," Barnes said.

Then eight months later, Barnes added more in a special report to the Foreign Office on Gaza. In it, he said the Israelis "exposed themselves to criticism they are riding roughshod over the legal proprieties and creating facts." Barnes viewed the issue of moving Gazans to Egypt as "a typical piece of insensitivity to international opinion."

The Israelis responded to the British government in September 1971, admitting to them that Tel Aviv had plotted a secret scheme to send Palestinians from Gaza to other areas, most notably El-Arish in northern Egypt.

Shimon Peres, who was then the Israeli Minister of Transport and Communications and later became a party leader taking several ministerial posts as well as the positions of prime minister and president, told the Political Counselor at the British Embassy in Tel Aviv that "it is time for Israel to do more in the Gaza Strip and less in the West Bank."

Peres told the meeting there was a ministerial committee reviewing the situation in Gaza. He added that the recommendations of the committee "will not be published nor would there be any dramatic announcement of new policy", confirming that there was "agreement in the cabinet on a fresh and long-term approach to the refugee problem" in Gaza. He pointed out that Egypt's El-Arish was a part of Israel's "new policy". He claimed the affected refugees have also been content to "accept high-quality apartments built by the Egyptians in El Arish, where they can have semi-permanent residence."

The secret Israeli plan "will lead to a change in the situation within a year or so," he said while reminding the attendees at the meeting about the total secrecy surrounding the Israelis' expansionist policy.

Peres insisted that any talk about the Israeli regime's plan to move Palestinians out of their land "will only feed ammunition to Israel's enemies." After Peres was asked whether "many people will be transferred to restore peace and viability to Gaza," he responded by saying "about a third of the camp population will be resettled elsewhere in the Strip or outside it."

At the meeting, Peres emphasized Tel Aviv's belief that "there is a need to perhaps reduce the total population by about 100,000 people."

The British diplomat conveyed the Israelis' secret plan to London, claiming to his superiors that "most of those affected are, in fact, content to find themselves better alternative housing with the compensation they received when their huts were removed."

Then in a separate assessment of the Israelis secret plan revealed by Peres, the British diplomat noted that the Israelis believed that any permanent solution to the problems of the Gaza Strip "must include the rehabilitation of part of the population outside its present borders."

Israeli policy, he explained, included resettling Palestinians in the northern Sinai Peninsula of Egypt, but he said that “the Israeli government risks facing criticism, but the practical results are more important” for the Israelis.

Head of the Near East Department at the Foreign Office, M. E. Pike, reported that “drastic measures are now being taken to reduce the size of the refugee camps and open them up. This means forcibly removing refugees from their current homes, or rather their huts, to be more precise, and evacuating them to El Arish in Egyptian territory.” “A more ambitious resettlement programme now appears to be underway,” Pike added.

In an official meeting a month later, the Israelis informed a number of foreign embassy officials of additional details about the plan to move Palestinians out of Gaza.

In this meeting, Israeli regime forces Brigadier General Shlomo Gazit, coordinator of Activities in the Administrated (Occupied) Territories, claimed to embassy officials that the inhumane Tel Aviv forces do not destroy Palestinian homes in Gaza “unless there is alternative housing”, adding that the demolitions that were carried out were “limited by the amount of alternative accommodation available within Gaza, including El Arish.”

Gazit said 700 of the Palestinian families whose homes were destroyed by the Israeli forces in Gaza have found alternative accommodation through their own efforts. “The remainder has been rehoused either within the Gaza Strip or in El Arish,” Gazit added.

The British Air Force attaché present at the meeting, Colonel P G H-Harwood, said Gazit explained that “the houses in El Arish were chosen because it was the only place with a readily available supply of empty houses in a good state of repair.”

In response to a question raised by H-Harwood’s about the accommodations, Gazit responded that the available houses “were previously owned by Egyptian officers.”

This situation seemed at odds, from the British point of view, with three principles that had been announced by General Moshe Dayan, the Israeli War Minister, which had guaranteed control over the occupied territories after the 1967 war. These principles were: a minimum military presence, a minimum of interference in normal civilian life, and a maximum of contact or open bridges with Israel and the rest of the Arab world.

Ambassador Barnes, in a comprehensive report, warned that his information indicated that UNRWA “anticipates that Israel will resort to the deportation solution”, pointing that the agency “understands the Israeli security problem,” but “cannot agree to the forced transfer of refugees from their homes, nor to their evacuation even on a temporary basis to El Arish in Egypt.”

In its assessment of the Israeli scheme, the Near East Administration warned that “whatever the Israeli justifications for this far-reaching policy, we cannot help but feel that the Israelis underestimate the extent of the anger that this [Israeli] doctrine of creating facts on the ground will arouse in the Arab world and at the United Nations.”

The U.S. and the UK declined to tell the Egyptians about the Israelis’ plan to move Palestinians to El-Arish.

Political observers maintain that Israelis always hatch their plots with the aid of the U.S. and its allies. The United States is the biggest supplier of arms, munitions, and provisions to the Tel Aviv regime and its inhumane killing machine.

[SOURCE: PRESS TV and NEWS AGENCIES]

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