

Food, water, leccy... Gaza

As we write, Trump has threatened all-out war on Gaza (**see back**). But this month was already disastrous.

Netanyahu demanded a new plan, agreed privately with the US, to have captives released without ending the war.

To force it through, Israel cut off food and fuel supplies, **breaking international law**. Since 2 March aid lorries have queued up at the border with Egypt. ► Food prices quickly doubled.

Hamas called it “bullying” and demanded the implementation of the 19 January ceasefire agreement in full.

In response, Israel upped the ante on 3 March, aiming to consign the ceasefire agreement to the dustbin.

Israeli radio reported the government was considering a **‘hell plan’** to cut off water and electricity, again **breaking international law**.



Decades of lawbreaking

For decades, Israel has targeted the farmers and fishermen who could feed Gaza. The Israeli navy fires at fishermen daily and confines them to inland waters, defying the Oslo Agreement. Before the current genocide, the Israeli military aerial-sprayed herbicides over Palestinian crops along Gaza's eastern border. Amnesty International reported that 113,000 farmers could not access farmland in the internal “buffer zone”.

In October 2023, Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant imposed a “*complete siege on Gaza. There will be no electricity, no food, no water, no fuel, everything will be closed.*” The International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Gallant and Netanyahu, stressing that the lack of food, water, electricity, fuel and medical supplies “*created conditions of life calculated to bring about the destruction of part of the civilian population in Gaza.*”

Hundreds of Gaza's water and sanitation facilities have been damaged or destroyed since 2023, as the BBC reported. Oxfam accused Israel of weaponising water in its military campaign. Two desalination plants closed by 4 March after electricity cuts.

Collective punishment

On 4 March the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Minister Catherine West was asked how the Labour government would compel Israel to end its collective punishment of Gaza. Ms West declined to utter the words “*collective punishment*”. She simply said the UK was making clear to Israel “*that humanitarian aid must not be prevented from entering Gaza... [and] should never be contingent on a ceasefire or used as a political tool.*” Words, but no action.