

Arab states policing Gaza as Trump and Netanyahu plan ethnic cleansing of Palestinians

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US President Donald Trump has made clear that his plan to ethnically cleanse the Gaza Strip assumes the direct collusion of the Arab regimes.

When Trump first issued an open call for Israel to “clean” Gaza of its Palestinian inhabitants, in a textbook definition of ethnic cleansing, he told reporters on Air Force One, “You’re talking about probably a million and a half people, and we just clean out” the Gaza Strip, which he described as a “demolition site”.

He then called for the Palestinians to be resettled in Jordan and Egypt, adding, “I wish [Egypt’s President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi] would take some. We helped them a lot, and I’m sure he’d help us. He’s a friend of mine. He’s in ... a rough neighbourhood. But I think he would do it, and I think the king of Jordan would do it too.” He later made the not too subtle observation that both countries received significant aid from the US.

Trump’s call was met with pro-forma and polite rejection from both al-Sisi and Jordan’s King Abdullah. Likewise his subsequent proposal, made at the White House Tuesday alongside Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, of a direct US takeover of Gaza was rejected by all the Arab regimes, who, along with all the major imperialist powers, reiterated their commitment to a Palestinian return to their homeland and an eventual “two states solution.”

But however politically difficult this might be for the bourgeoisie in the Middle East, and it certainly is, Trump has reasons to anticipate some form of deal being reached on ethnic cleansing, even if this doesn’t involve a US real estate deal.

Over the last 16 months, the Arab states have given their backing for Israel’s genocidal assault and deepened their collusion with the Netanyahu government in policing the Palestinians and suppressing domestic opposition. Their alternative to the forcible displacement of the Palestinians from Gaza desired by Trump and Netanyahu is not a mythical “two states solution”, but their agreeing to act as

prison guards for Palestinians trapped in a ruined enclave—without homes, water, electricity, health care and any of the fundamentals of existence. And if this proves unacceptable to the White House, then collusion in some variant of ethnic cleansing is not excluded.

Trump’s statements confirm that the fascist government of Netanyahu utilised the Hamas-led assault on October 7, 2023 to launch a pre-planned campaign of mass murder with the aim of the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians, beginning with Gaza and then moving on to the West Bank and including Israel’s two million Arab citizens.

The conflict, which the Israeli regime deliberately provoked and about whose preparations it had received multiple warnings, is part of the Netanyahu government’s broader effort to annex all the Palestinian territories, expand its borders into Lebanon and Syria, and construct a “greater Israel” to dominate the Middle East as a garrison state for US imperialism. The Biden administration financed and directed it as a key element of its plan to assert US hegemony over the resource-rich region and suppress all opposition to Washington and its regional allies.

Israel has killed at least 47,500 Palestinians in Gaza, mostly women, children and the elderly, with many more buried under the rubble and unaccounted for that could bring the death toll to hundreds of thousands, as Trump inadvertently conceded when he used the figure of 1.8 million people, not 2.3 million, for the population of Gaza. It has displaced approximately 86 percent of Gaza’s population—1.7 million of its population.

In the occupied West Bank, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) has instituted widespread closures, bombed Jenin refugee camp and destroyed residential buildings and public infrastructure. Around 35 percent of Jenin is without access to water and Israel’s military operation there has escalated since the ceasefire in Gaza. In the last 13 days, it has killed 25 Palestinians, bringing the total number of Palestinians killed in the West Bank since October 2023 to more than

Israel's Defence Minister Yisrael Katz said, "Jenin is only the beginning," and that there will be "more [Israeli] operations in other parts of the West Bank." In addition, the Israeli Knesset has approved a draft law permitting settlers to purchase Palestinian land in the occupied West Bank, confirming plans for permanent annexation. Far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, who has long been pushing for the annexation of all the West Bank and calling for the mass expulsion of Palestinians, earlier told Israeli settlers that Israel should wait for the inauguration of Trump before moving to more direct annexation moves.

The US is reportedly also considering relocating some of Gaza's 2.3 million residents to Indonesia, with Secretary of State Marco Rubio holding a phone call with Jakarta's Foreign Minister Sugiono. Last year, President Prabowo Subianto said his country was willing to send peacekeeping troops to enforce a ceasefire in Gaza. The Trump administration was on the point of brokering a normalization deal between Israel and Indonesia in 2021 just before its term expired.

Alongside the US and the European powers, the Middle East regimes have been direct accomplices in Israel's criminality from day one. These rotten regimes have since Israel's first expulsions of the Palestinians in 1947-48 repeatedly betrayed the Palestinian masses. And from the beginning of Israel's siege of Gaza, the Arab ruling elites have not only failed to come to the aid of the Palestinians by deploying military forces against Israel but even refused to consider so much as an embargo on oil and gas sales to Jerusalem.

Neither did they repudiate their treaties with Israel. Egypt, the most populous and powerful Arab state, was the first to openly abandon the Palestinians and make peace with Israel and thereby the US in 1979. Jordan followed suit in 1994 after the fraudulent Oslo Accords. More recently, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain—given the nod by its paymaster Saudi Arabia—Sudan and Morocco made their peace with Israel under the previous Trump administration-brokered Abraham Accords. Saudi Arabia is expected to follow suit.

Egypt and Jordan have maintained Israel's blockade of Gaza throughout and worked strenuously to demobilise the widespread opposition within their own countries. As part of the ceasefire arrangements, al-Sisi has temporarily accepted dozens of Palestinian prisoners released from Israeli jails and deported to Egypt where they remain effectively imprisoned, prior to their relocation to Turkey or Qatar. Israel had refused to allow Palestinians convicted of the most serious crimes to return to their homes in Gaza or the West Bank.

There are more than 150,000 Gazans stranded in Egypt and living in dire conditions, unable to return following Israel's destruction of the Rafah crossing in May 2024.

Al-Sisi has accepted Israel's new policies for the reopening of the Rafah crossing that will allow Palestinians to exit Gaza but prevent their return to the besieged enclave, presaging a broader strategy of permanent displacement.

The Arab regimes are offering to help control Gaza, provided there is some face-saving formula whereby a reconstituted Palestinian Authority (PA) plays a part. Under the treacherous leadership of the aging President Mahmoud Abbas in the West Bank, the PA has repeatedly demonstrated its willingness to serve as Israel's subcontractor in suppressing the Palestinian people and earned their undying hatred as a result.

Last December, the PA followed up Israel's earlier assaults on Jenin refugee camp with its own weeks-long operation, aimed not just at reassuring Tel Aviv and Washington but also Saudi Arabia's de-facto ruler Mohammed bin Salman, a key ally of the first Trump administration, who has made normalization of relations with Israel conditional on a Palestinian statelet.

Last week, according to the *Middle East Eye*, the PA told Steve Witkoff, Trump's Middle East envoy, that it is ready to "clash" with Hamas if that is necessary to take power in Gaza. Apparently, Hussein al-Sheikh, a senior Palestinian official, presented the plan for the PA to take control of Gaza at a meeting in Riyadh. The meeting came at the PA's request after Witkoff refused a meeting in Ramallah, in the West Bank.

The ultimate "reward" for the betrayal of the Palestinians by the Arab states is Trump's plan to destroy their major regional rival, Iran, as part of its preparations for war on China. Trump signed a presidential memorandum Tuesday before meeting Netanyahu stating that Iran cannot have nuclear weapons and that the US has the right to block the sale of Iranian oil. He warned he has left "instructions" for his advisers that if Iran assassinated him, it "would be obliterated."

More broadly, the Arab bourgeoisie, sitting atop a restive population that hates them, is supporting US imperialism and by extension Israel in return for Washington's commitment to back their security in the event of a mass movement to unseat them like the Arab Spring of the early 2010s.



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