

# Concluding Middle East tour, Trump reiterates plan for US to “take” Gaza

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US President Donald Trump concluded his Middle East tour in Qatar Thursday by reiterating his administration’s plan to annex the Gaza Strip, on the same day that Israel massacred over 136 Palestinians.

“I’d be proud to have the United States have it, take it, make it a freedom zone,” Trump said, referring to Gaza. He added, “It’s not like you’re trying to save something. There’s no buildings.” Trump did not mention the fact that this destruction had been wrought using US-provided weapons.

In February, Trump declared that “The US will take over the Gaza Strip.... We’ll own it.” He said the US will “level it out” and “create an economic development that will supply unlimited numbers of jobs.”

In February, Trump explicitly called for the ethnic cleansing of Gaza, stating that other countries will “build various domains that will ultimately be occupied by the 1.8 million Palestinians living in Gaza.”

In recent days, the US and international media have been full of reports of a “rift” between the US and Israel, which Trump did not visit during his tour of the Middle East. It is clear, however, that the US is fully committed to the Israeli genocide in Gaza. The *Times of Israel* reported Thursday that the Trump administration was not seeking to pressure Israel to stop the “war” in Gaza, declaring, “The Israeli government is a sovereign government.”

In the three months since Trump made his proposal to “own” Gaza and expel its Palestinian population, the Netanyahu government has made major inroads toward this plan.

Last week, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced a plan to place Gaza under permanent military occupation and displace its population to concentration camps in preparation for

their removal. Echoing the “final solution,” the Nazi term for the genocide of Europe’s Jews, Netanyahu declared, “It’s time to launch the concluding moves.”

The next day, Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich added, “Within a year, ... Gaza will be entirely destroyed, civilians will be sent to ... the south to a humanitarian zone ... and from there they will start to leave in great numbers to third countries.”

The means by which the Netanyahu government hopes to displace the Palestinians from Gaza is through mass starvation. For 74 days, there has been no food, water, or electricity allowed into Gaza, leading to a surge in malnutrition. The Netanyahu government is hoping to use food as a weapon to force the displacement of the Palestinian people.

This is why its proposal to completely take over the provision of rations in the Gaza Strip is of such significance. Israel plans to effectively ban the operations of all humanitarian organizations, totally monopolizing the distribution of food to force the population to comply with its demands.

According to the US-Israeli plan, after the population is entirely internally displaced, food distribution will be conducted by the US-based “Gaza Humanitarian Foundation,” with distribution operated by Pentagon contractors and with distribution points guarded by US soldiers of fortune.

On Wednesday, the “Gaza Humanitarian Foundation” announced that it would begin operating by the end of the month.

Israel’s UN Ambassador Danny Danon said that food distribution “will be run by the fund itself, led by the US.”

Beyond these actions, Reuters reported last week that “The United States and Israel have discussed the possibility of Washington leading a temporary post-war

administration of Gaza.”

All reputable global human rights organizations have denounced the US-Israeli proposal for the creation of “humanitarian zones” as a means to force the displacement of the population.

Deputy United Nations spokesperson Farhan Haq told reporters Thursday that the UN categorically refused to take part in the “humanitarian” plan, saying, “This particular distribution plan does not accord with our basic principles, including those of impartiality, neutrality, and independence, and we will not be participating in this.”

In a statement Thursday, Human Rights Watch said that the Israeli plan “would amount to an abhorrent escalation of its ongoing crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and acts of genocide” in the Gaza Strip. It added that “Israel’s blockade has transcended military tactics to become a tool of extermination.”

Al Jazeera, citing medical experts, reported that 136 Palestinians had been killed Thursday in a massive wave of attacks throughout the Gaza Strip. Mass casualties were reported in the Jabalya refugee camp in Northern Gaza and in Khan Younis in the south.

On Monday, the UN-backed Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) warned that the entire population of Gaza is at “critical risk of famine.” It found that 244,000 people in Gaza are already facing a food “catastrophe,” the worst classification for mass starvation. This number is an 85 percent increase over the IPC’s earlier report in October 2024.

This week, Gaza’s Ministry of Health said that 53,000 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli attacks since October 7, 2023.

Trump made his latest remarks on the anniversary of the 1948 Nakba, or ethnic cleansing of Palestine, which led to the displacement of 750,000 Palestinians from their homes, and the destruction of 530 Palestinian towns and villages.

In an interview with Al Jazeera, Israeli historian Ilan Pappé said that “The ethnic cleansing of 1948 was incomplete, although it resulted in the expulsion of half of the Palestinian population.”

He added, “This is still an impulse of Israel—to try and have as much as possible with as few Palestinians as possible.” He said the Netanyahu government “believes that now is a historical opportunity to complete what has not been completed in 1948.” Pappé

concluded, “We had ethnic cleansing in 1948 and now we have genocide in Gaza.”



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