

Middle East leaders agree to police Gaza on behalf of US and Israel

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Last month's obscene scene at Sharm el-Sheikh represents an ever more disgusting link in the chain of the Middle East regimes' decades-long history of betraying the Palestinians.

Their signing by the Middle East regimes of US President Donald Trump's fraudulent "Peace Declaration" for Gaza signals their agreement to disarm Hamas and police the Palestinians. This will happen while Israel retains its military control of Gaza and continues its efforts to drive out the Palestinians. It makes them direct accomplices of Israel's genocide and ethnic cleansing of Gaza.

The policing of the Palestinians is an integral part of Trump's plans to establish an imperialist protectorate that tramples on the rights of the Palestinians and forge an anti-Iranian axis in preparation for a potential war for regime-change in Tehran to roll back Chinese and Russian influence in the region.

The treacherous trajectory of the Arab regimes

The treachery of the Arab regimes should come as no surprise. For decades, while claiming to support the Palestinians against the Zionist state in the name of Arab nationalism and brotherhood, the Arab armies—with Egypt taking the lead—kept the Palestine Liberation Army firmly under their control until their defeat in the June 1967 Arab Israeli war.

Yasser Arafat and his Fateh movement, committed to the establishment of a Palestinian state by means of armed struggle, took the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), an umbrella group of multiple factions. Each had different ideologies and sought support from different Arab states, Moscow or Beijing, that was conditional on rejecting a revolutionary appeal to the masses of workers and oppressed of the Arab world.

One after another Arab regime—Jordan, Syria and Lebanon—turned their guns on the PLO, while Egypt signed a peace agreement with Israel in 1979 and Jordan followed suit in 1994. In 1982, all the Arab regimes abandoned the PLO as it faced the might of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in support of the Christian fascist forces.

Tunisia had to be forced to offer refuge to the PLO after all the other Arab regimes refused. Retired US diplomat Ryan Crocker told *Politico* magazine last year that none of the Arab regimes were willing to accept Palestinian refugees because they had long viewed the Palestinians with "fear and loathing" and those who had taken refuge in their countries "as a threat, a foreign population that should be weakened if not exterminated."

After the first Palestinian Intifada erupted in 1987, they all nominally supported the 1993 Oslo Accords and its prospect of a mini-Palestinian state with its capital in East Jerusalem alongside Israel, but did nothing to

stop Israel's expanding settlements that rendered such a statelet impossible.

When Hamas, affiliated to the Muslim Brotherhood, unexpectedly defeated Fatah in the Palestinian elections in January 2006, Egypt and the Fatah-dominated Palestinian Authority in the West Bank helped Israel impose a blockade on Gaza. The "two state solution" became an empty mantra.

Not one of the Middle East regimes lifted a finger over the last two years to oppose Israel's genocidal war and ethnic cleansing of Gaza. Turkey and Jordan ensured that oil supplies and other vital goods reached Israel via their territory. The Gulf States refused to implement an oil boycott on Israel and its backers, much less end their close diplomatic, economic and military relations with Israel. This continued even after Israeli missiles targeting Hamas leaders struck Qatar on September 9, just three days after all of them had taken part in joint military exercises with the US.

They colluded every step of the way with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's gang of fascists, settlers and religious bigots committed to Jewish Supremacy "from the River Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea"—covering their treachery with hand wringing, vacuous appeals to the US-dominated UN Security Council and calls for a ceasefire.

The signing ceremony at Sharm el-Sheikh

The agreement at Sharm el-Sheikh was not signed or even attended by Israel and Hamas, the grossly unequal protagonists in Israel's war of genocide and ethnic cleansing that has all but obliterated Gaza. Netanyahu pulled out of the ceremony at the last minute when it became clear that his presence threatened to derail the event. Hamas, who was told to accept the deal within six days or else face "all hell", was not even invited.

Instead it was Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who did sign and who had put massive pressure on Hamas to accept Trump's terms. Other Arab leaders in attendance included King Abdullah of Jordan, Oman's Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and representatives from Bahrain, Kuwait, Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. Saudia Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), who are expected to fund the International Stabilisation Force, and Oman sent lower-level officials to signal their disapproval that Hamas would be allowed to remain as a political organization in Gaza.

Leaders from Australia, Brazil, Canada, Europe, India, Indonesia, Kenya, New Zealand, South Africa and the UK rushed to Sharm el-Sheikh to back a wretched deal that makes permanent the colonial subjugation of

the Palestinian masses and gives a fig leaf of legality to the ongoing genocide. Above all, they were there to make a public show of their backing for Washington and Tel Aviv in the coming conflicts under the banner of Gaza's "reconstruction."

Hailed as the beginning of a new chapter in Gaza, the ceasefire has enabled Israel to take control of 58 percent of the territory, now entirely ethnically cleansed, behind the "Yellow Line" in the east where it is constructing fortifications, while more than 2 million Palestinians, mostly barely surviving in tents, are crammed into the remaining 42 percent. This is the start of the permanent partition and occupation of Gaza, while the daily mass killing and the deliberate starvation of the population continue.

The terms of the ceasefire agreement

Trump's 20-point agreement retains many of the features of the GREAT Trust, drawn up by the Boston Consulting Group in consultation with the Tony Blair Institute.

The first phase includes an immediate and total ceasefire, the return of the 48 Israeli hostages, including 28 deceased hostages, held in Gaza, 1,968 Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli prisons and 15 Palestinian bodies for every deceased Israeli hostage handed over by Hamas, the partial withdrawal of Israeli troops and 600 aid trucks per day allowed into Gaza, to be coordinated by international organisations, including the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Crescent.

The ceasefire will be monitored by the signatories to the deal—the US, Egypt, Qatar and Turkey—with the US guaranteeing to enforce it. Ever since, all four signatories have done nothing to stop Israel continuing its daily attacks on Gaza and withholding aid.

Under the second stage, Hamas's weapons, tunnels and military infrastructure will be dismantled, Hamas would be offered an amnesty, with members refusing to disarm or commit to peaceful co-existence with Israel allowed to go into exile. All this would be supervised by a temporary International Stabilization Force (ISF), made up of US, Arab and European personnel, that would also train a Palestinian police force to "ensure long-term stability and peace."

Under the third stage of the agreement, a temporary, technocratic committee that would include some Palestinians, supervised by a "Board of Peace" headed by Trump and including former UK prime minister and unindicted war criminal Tony Blair and other international figures, would govern Gaza, organize its reconstruction and hand over to the PA at some point in the future after completion of an unspecified "reform" programme.

Consolidating and expanding the Abraham Accords

Vague formulations about handing Gaza over to a reformed PA are aimed at providing the necessary cover for Saudi Arabia to sign up to the Abraham Accords, with Riyadh's de facto ruler Mohammed bin Sulman due to visit the White House on November 18.

A key element of the US plan for a "New Middle East", launched by the Biden administration at the G20 summit in New Delhi in 2023 and backed by Netanyahu, is the India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor. This is the transport, energy and data corridor linking South Asia, the Gulf and Europe, via Israel, set to become a vital logistics hub, and its northern port of Haifa, now owned by the Indian port operator and logistics company, Adani Ports and SEZ. A reconstructed Gaza would host low-tax "special

economic zones" synonymous with low-wage, exploitative labour conditions.

The Abraham Accords were initiated under the first Trump administration and have already served to increase economic and military cooperation between the US, Israel and the Gulf petrostates, providing a counterweight to China's Belt and Road Initiative and bypassing Iran by tying in India and the Gulf to Washington. It builds on Israel's increasing integration into the wider region via its offshore oil and gas fields in Eastern Mediterranean that are part financed by the UAE. Israel's Leviathan field is set to feed Egypt's LNG plants for the next 15 years, with 130 billion cubic meters of gas, under a \$35 billion deal that re-exports Israeli gas to Europe, and powers Jordan's electricity grid.

Trump's plan is the most naked expression of imperialism: creating a de facto corporate body appointed by the US president, which he himself will chair as ruler over Gaza, after his regional attack dog has pulverized it on his behalf.

It resembles Britain's East India Company, set up at end of the 16th century by a group of prominent businessmen and merchants in the City of London whose families are still prominent today. In 1600, they were given a royal charter by Queen Elizabeth I as The Governor and Company of Merchants of London Trading into the East Indies. Its purpose was to break the commercial power of the Portuguese and Dutch in Asia, bound up with England's efforts to expand its global footprint and break the dominance of its competitors in maritime trade. The East India Company eventually became a quasi-sovereign power, ruling over parts of India.

Gaza's position is significant in this regard: it is sited at the eastern end of the Mediterranean at the juxtaposition of three continents. It would become US imperialism's military bridgehead in a region that has vast reserves of mineral resources—including off Gaza's shores. The Palestinians have long been denied access to Gaza's offshore resources, discovered in 1999 in waters allocated to them under the Oslo Accords.

Lebanon, which only resolved its maritime borders with Israel under Biden administration brokerage in 2022, has been refused the necessary financing for exploration unless it dismantles Hezbollah's military and political power in the country. Syria too has yet to begin exploration in its waters, with former jihadist, now interim President Ahmad al-Shara'a set to visit the White House on November 10. Occupying a location of enormous geostrategic importance, especially vis-à-vis Russia and China, Gaza would serve as an important sales market and investment location.

The Middle East powers are fearful of the opprobrium that their participation in such a criminal imperialist operation will generate among their own working class. Following their demands for a UN mandate that would set out the ISF's goals, powers, subordination and methods of operation in order to legitimize their suppression of the Palestinians, the Trump administration has submitted a draft resolution to the UN Security Council. It would give the US and other participating countries a broad two-year mandate to disarm Hamas, govern Gaza and be in charge of security, while performing "additional tasks as may be necessary in support of the Gaza agreement."

Crucially, it will be established and operate "in close consultation and cooperation with Egypt and Israel" and work under the broad remit of Trump's "Board of Peace" that would govern the enclave until such time as the Palestinian Authority was deemed fit to govern.

It resembles nothing so much as the 1922 League of Nations mandates to the colonial powers Britain and France to control Palestine and Syria, with the US and Israel as the colonial powers. If agreed, it would constitute the first time the Arab regimes had contributed their own troops to a UN mission.

While Turkey has offered to send troops—subject to a UN mandate—such are the tensions with Israel over its hosting of Hamas's political bureau, its designation of Hamas as a legitimate resistance group and its opposition to Israel's efforts to keep Syria weak and divided that

Netanyahu has refused to allow Turkish or Qatari forces into Gaza. He has “completely rejected” the deployment of Palestinian Authority security forces trained by Egypt and Jordan in Gaza.

These corrupt regimes, all of whom rule with an iron fist over impoverished masses, have made a Faustian bargain: their open participation in the forceful suppression of the Palestinians and any resistance to Israel and US imperialism in return for Washington’s commitment to back their “security” in the event of a new “Arab Spring” or mass movement to unseat them, and to wage war against Iran, which has backed opposition forces to their rule, as part of its preparations for war on China.



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