

Indonesian government joins Trump's colonial "Board of Peace" in Gaza

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At the Davos World Economic Forum last month, Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto signed the charter to join the misnamed Board of Peace, the administrative body led by the Trump administration to rule over devastated Gaza in the interests of US imperialism. Prabowo pledged \$1 billion to the Board, which his government has falsely described as a humanitarian initiative focused on the "transition, stabilisation and reconstruction" of the decimated Palestinian territory.

Presidential spokesperson Prasetyo Hadi announced on Tuesday that Indonesia was preparing to send up to 8,000 troops to Gaza as part of the so-called International Stabilisation Force (ISF) to suppress any opposition to Trump's plans to transform the Palestinian territory into a US-dominated colony.

While the exact size and remit of the Indonesian force is yet to be determined, it will form a major component of the ISF which reportedly will number around 20,000 troops. Politically, the fact that the world's largest predominantly Muslim country has been the first to commit troops hands the Trump administration a significant boost to its criminal plans. On Monday, Indonesia's army chief of staff General Maruli Simanjuntak announced that the training of troops as "peacekeepers" had already begun.

At Davos, Prabowo was at pains to justify Indonesia's support for the US take-over of Gaza. "It is clear that the suffering of the people of Gaza has been reduced, alleviated. Humanitarian aid has been entering the enclave on a massive scale. Indonesia is ready to participate," he said. "This is truly a chance to achieve peace in Gaza."

Other government officials justified the decision along similar lines. Foreign Minister Sugiono said in a video statement, quoted by *South China Morning Post*,

"Palestinian independence and recognition of Palestinian sovereignty are things we have been striving for. The Board of Peace is one concrete alternative we can currently rely on to achieve these goals."

This is a monstrous fraud. Trump's Board of Peace has nothing whatsoever to do with "reconstruction" or "peace." It is an openly colonial body, dominated by the US and Israel itself—in other words, the very forces that have funded, directed and enacted the genocide of Palestinians. It includes notorious political figures such as British war criminal Tony Blair, who played a key role in the illegal US-led invasion and subjugation of Iraq in 2003.

The Indonesian government—which under former president Joko Widodo and now Prabowo has postured as being pro-Palestine—is falsely claiming that its participation in this reactionary council will be a safeguard against any violation of Palestinian rights.

Sugiono declared: "We will ensure that the efforts carried out by the Board of Peace remain focused on Palestinian independence and the achievement of a two-state solution."

After two days of meetings with religious and foreign policy figures, the Prabowo government suggested the country may withdraw from the Board of Peace if it fails to advance "Palestinian sovereignty."

Such statements, as the latest announcement of Indonesian troops demonstrates, are completely meaningless. From the outset, the board's purpose has been to exclude Palestinians from any governing role, instead giving the butchers of Gaza free rein to police the enclave and allocate reconstruction funds according to their geopolitical and economic interests.

By lending support to these reactionary plans, Prabowo is clearly seeking US support for the

economic interests of the Indonesian bourgeoisie. That he sees no problem in supporting a framework built on the bones of Palestinians to do so is no surprise.

As a general during the Suharto military dictatorship, Prabowo was personally responsible for numerous bloody crimes: first as a highly trained killer for the notorious Kopassus special forces in East Timor, Papua and elsewhere, and later as an army commander who kidnapped, tortured and “disappeared” student protesters. His crimes were so blatant that he was discharged from the military, after the junta collapsed in 1998, and was even barred entry to the US until Trump rehabilitated him in 2016.

It should be noted that Prabowo, Suharto’s son-in-law, was the slated successor to head the military regime, which had come to power through the 1965–66 CIA-backed coup that resulted in the massacre of more than half a million workers, peasants and alleged Communists—one of greatest crimes of the 20th century. Last November, Prabowo officially declared the mass murderer Suharto a “national hero.”

Prabowo’s support for Trump’s plans signals a closer alignment of Indonesia with US imperialism. This is highly significant, given that one of the main features of Prabowo’s administration has been repeated declarations of a “non-aligned” foreign policy. Like other countries, Indonesia has attempted to balance between the US and China, which is its largest trading partner. But this balancing act is proving increasingly impossible as Trump accelerates the drive to war against Beijing.

Indonesia’s financial contribution to the Board, \$1 billion, will possibly be drawn from the Defence Ministry’s budget, Finance Minister Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa revealed last week. However, he also said the government is currently deciding which other state budget allocations could be used. The government is acutely aware, however, that its support for the US-led colonisation of Gaza is deeply unpopular and is likely to provoke popular opposition, particularly if further austerity measures are imposed to pay for it.

If successive Indonesian governments have had to present themselves as sympathetic to Palestine, that is because of the profound hostility felt by the country’s working class and youth towards imperialist oppression, especially in the Middle East. A demonstration in Jakarta in November 2023 against

Israel’s invasion of Gaza reportedly drew two million people.

No political parties in Indonesia’s parliament, either within or outside Prabowo’s large coalition, have publicly condemned the decision to join the Board of Peace. Nor have major Islamic organisations such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. The Islamic Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) voiced opposition on religious grounds and urged Prabowo to withdraw, but had nothing to say about the predatory character of US imperialism.

Prabowo’s embrace of the powers responsible for the genocide is a warning that he will not hesitate to use similar violent methods towards any opposition at home, either over his support for the US-led subjugation of Gaza or his government’s austerity program.



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