

# MP-IDSA *Issue Brief*

## International Stabilisation Force in Gaza: A Turning Point or a Gamble?

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### **S**ummary

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2803 represents an ambitious effort to reshape Gaza's political and security landscape. While it establishes a formally endorsed framework for ceasefire monitoring, reconstruction and transitional governance, its practical foundations are fragile. Key uncertainties include states' willingness to contribute troops and to provide sustained funding.

The United Nations Security Council’s adoption of Resolution 2803 on 17 November 2025 marks one of the most consequential developments in the Gaza conflict since the war began. By endorsing United States President Donald Trump’s Comprehensive Peace Plan and authorising the creation of an International Stabilisation Force (ISF), the Council signalled a shift from years of paralysis to an ambitious international effort.<sup>1</sup> The resolution also welcomed the establishment of the Board of Peace (BoP), a transitional body with an unusual level of international legal authority.

The resolution passed with 13 votes in favour, while Russia and China abstained. Reactions to the resolution among stakeholders varied widely. The US, Israel and European countries welcomed it as a constructive step forward, and most Arab states also expressed support. In contrast, Hamas rejected the resolution outright, declaring that it would not accept its terms. This brief examines the significance of the resolution, its political and regional implications, and the operational challenges associated with its implementation.

## Background

To understand the context of Resolution 2803, it is essential to trace the events that led to its adoption. The Gaza Strip has long been a centre of protracted conflict, humanitarian crises and geopolitical contention. The conflict escalated sharply on 7 October 2023, when Hamas launched a coordinated attack against Israel, involving rocket barrages and ground infiltrations. The assault resulted in more than 1,250 Israeli deaths, including foreign nationals, and over 250 people were taken hostage.<sup>2</sup>

On 28 October, Israel launched a large-scale military operation targeting Hamas infrastructure, leadership and facilities across Gaza. This resulted in widespread destruction, mass displacement and a severe humanitarian emergency. The UN estimates that around 68,000 Palestinians have been killed and more than 170,000 injured since the operation began.<sup>3</sup> Humanitarian access has remained critically restricted, further exacerbating the crisis.

Throughout this period, the Security Council struggled to play a meaningful role. Draft resolutions regularly fell victim to geopolitical rivalries. Over the past two years, the Council discussed 14 resolutions. The United States vetoed most of them. As a result, only four resolutions were adopted.

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<sup>1</sup> “[Resolution 2803 \(2025\)](#)”, UN Doc. S/RES/2803 (2025), United Nations, 17 November 2025.

<sup>2</sup> “[Two-Year Anniversary of October 7th Attack](#)”, US Department of State, 7 October 2025.

<sup>3</sup> “[Reported Impact Snapshot | Gaza Strip \(7 October 2025\)](#)”, United Nations Office for the Coordinated Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 7 October 2025.

The first, proposed by Malta on 15 November 2023, called for urgent, extended humanitarian pauses and safe corridors for the delivery of essential supplies.<sup>4</sup> A month later, the Council adopted another resolution requesting the Secretary-General to appoint a Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator to accelerate aid delivery.<sup>5</sup> The Council adopted a third resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire during Ramadan.<sup>6</sup> In June 2024, Resolution 2735 was adopted, welcoming the ceasefire and calling for a permanent cessation of hostilities.<sup>7</sup> However, hostilities and humanitarian catastrophe continued in Gaza. As UN progress remained limited, diplomatic attention increasingly shifted to external initiatives.

### ***Trump’s 20-Point Peace Plan***

In September 2025, US President Donald Trump announced a 20-point peace plan, called the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict. It introduced a framework very different from earlier peace efforts, focusing on conditional governance, demilitarisation and strong US-led enforcement mechanisms. The plan proposed transforming Gaza into a demilitarised, terror-free zone and launching a significant international effort to rebuild the territory.<sup>8</sup> At its core, the plan aimed to transform Gaza into a “demilitarised, terror-free zone” overseen by a temporary technocratic Palestinian administration under intense international supervision. The cornerstone of the plan was the creation of the Board of Peace, a body chaired by Trump that would oversee political, security and reconstruction issues.<sup>9</sup>

Key elements of the plan included an immediate ceasefire, the release of all hostages and detainees, and a significant expansion of humanitarian aid. The plan also outlined a comprehensive economic development strategy, a special economic zone, and a buy-back and decommissioning programme for weapons.<sup>10</sup> In terms of security, responsibilities would shift to a new International Stabilisation Force working with vetted Palestinian police, while the Israel Defense Forces would withdraw in stages. Hamas would be excluded from governance unless its members renounced violence.

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<sup>4</sup> [“The Situation in the Middle East, Including the Palestinian Question”](#), United Nations, 15 October 2023.

<sup>5</sup> [“The Situation in the Middle East, Including the Palestinian Question”](#), UNSC Resolution 2720 (2023), United Nations, 22 December 2023.

<sup>6</sup> [“Resolution 2728 \(2024\)”](#), UN Doc. S/RES/2728(2024), United Nations, 25 March 2024.

<sup>7</sup> [“Resolution 2735 \(2024\)”](#), UN Doc. S/RES/2735 (2024), United Nations, 10 June 2024.

<sup>8</sup> [“White House Press Release - President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict”](#), The American Presidency Project, 29 September 2025.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

The plan also emphasised regional guarantees, interfaith dialogue and the creation of conditions for eventual Palestinian self-determination.<sup>11</sup> While it generated considerable debate, its endorsement through Resolution 2803 elevated it from a political proposal to a UN-backed framework, giving it both legitimacy and institutional weight.

## Key Provisions and Mandate of the Resolution 2803

Resolution 2803 formalises the Comprehensive Plan and authorises mechanisms for governance, security and the reconstruction of Gaza. The most significant elements are the establishment of the Board of Peace and the authorisation of the International Stabilisation Force.<sup>12</sup> The BoP is envisioned as a transitional governing entity with authority to coordinate reconstruction funding, manage redevelopment priorities, oversee aid distribution, and guide political reforms. It is also responsible for shaping the conditions under which the Palestinian Authority might eventually resume governance in Gaza.

Perhaps the most consequential component of the resolution is the authorisation of the ISF, which is mandated to perform several core tasks. It includes: monitoring and supporting the ceasefire, securing border areas with Egypt and Israel, protecting civilians and ensuring humanitarian access, assisting in demilitarisation by dismantling military infrastructure and collecting weapons from non-state actors, and training and supporting a vetted Palestinian police force.<sup>13</sup>

The resolution authorises the ISF to “use all necessary measures” to carry out its mandate, in accordance with international and humanitarian law. Its mandate runs until 31 December 2027, with any extension requiring a new decision.<sup>14</sup> Funding for both the BoP and the ISF will come from voluntary contributions by states and from dedicated financing mechanisms managed by the BoP. Additionally, the BoP must submit progress reports to the Security Council every six months.

## Stakeholders Responses

The adoption of Resolution 2803 prompted strong and diverse reactions. These responses reflected both the polarised nature of the Gaza conflict and the underlying geopolitical tensions. The US and most European states supported the resolution, viewing it as a practical framework for ending the conflict and beginning

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> [“Resolution 2803 \(2025\)”](#), no. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

reconstruction in Gaza.<sup>15</sup> Israel also welcomed the resolution. However, several leaders, including Prime Minister Netanyahu, restated their opposition to Palestinian statehood.<sup>16</sup>

Russia abstained because the resolution did not adequately uphold existing international legal principles, including commitments to a two-state solution. Moscow proposed an alternative draft that emphasised greater legal consistency and expanded the UN’s role in peacekeeping and administration.<sup>17</sup> China similarly abstained and criticised the resolution for lacking clarity regarding the structure and mandate of both the Board of Peace and the International Stabilisation Force. It also noted the limited role assigned to the UN and insufficient attention to Palestinian interests.<sup>18</sup>

Arab states expressed cautious support, emphasising the importance of reconstruction and humanitarian relief.<sup>19</sup> They viewed the plan as an opportunity to stabilise Gaza, accelerate reconstruction and contain regional spillover. At the same time, many underscored that any legitimate solution must include a credible pathway towards Palestinian statehood.<sup>20</sup> Egypt, already central to the peace plan through its role in coordinating security and training Palestinian police forces, called for the swift implementation of the resolution.<sup>21</sup> Qatar, which has long served as a key interlocutor between Hamas and other parties, is reluctant to be sidelined and sees both risks and opportunities in the resolution.<sup>22</sup> Saudi Arabia and the UAE, although not frontline mediators, are positioned to provide essential financial support and diplomatic backing.<sup>23</sup>

The Palestinian Authority offered conditional backing, seeing an opportunity to regain administrative responsibility in Gaza. However, it also expressed concern

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<sup>15</sup> [\*\*“Security Council Authorizes International Stabilization Force in Gaza, Adopting Resolution 2803 \(2025\)”\*\*](#), United Nations, 17 November 2025.

<sup>16</sup> [\*\*“Netanyahu Praises UNSC Gaza Resolution Vote, Thanks US President Trump”\*\*](#), *The Jerusalem Post*, 18 November 2025.

<sup>17</sup> [\*\*“Explanation of Vote by Permanent Representative Vassily Nebenzia after the UNSC Vote on a Draft Resolution on the Middle East Settlement”\*\*](#), Permanent Mission of the Russia Federation to the United Nations, 17 November 2025.

<sup>18</sup> [\*\*“Explanation of Vote by Ambassador Fu Cong on the UN Security Council Draft Resolution on the Post-War Arrangement of Gaza”\*\*](#), Permanent Mission of the People’s Republic of China to the United Nations, 17 November 2025.

<sup>19</sup> [\*\*“Joint Statement on the UN Security Council Resolution on Gaza”\*\*](#), US Embassy Jordan, 14 November 2025.

<sup>20</sup> [\*\*“Security Council Authorizes International Stabilization Force in Gaza, Adopting Resolution 2803 \(2025\)”\*\*](#), United Nations, 17 November 2025.

<sup>21</sup> [\*\*“Egypt Presses to Implement Gaza War-halt Deal Under UNSC Resolution: El-Sisi”\*\*](#), *Egypt Today*, 26 November 2025.

<sup>22</sup> [\*\*“Qatar Urges Swift Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution, Full Israeli Withdrawal from Gaza”\*\*](#), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, State of Qatar, 22 November 2025.

<sup>23</sup> [\*\*“United Arab Emirates – Republic of Finland Joint Statement”\*\*](#), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, United Arab Emirates, 22 November 2025.

about its limited role in the initial governance arrangements.<sup>24</sup> In contrast, Hamas rejected the resolution entirely, arguing that it fails to meet the rights and demands of the Palestinian people. Hamas also said that the resolution seeks to impose an international trusteeship over Gaza.<sup>25</sup> Iran, another important regional player, condemned the resolution, arguing that it violates Palestinian rights.<sup>26</sup>

## Political Implications and Regional Dynamics

Resolution 2803 marks a significant shift in how the international community is approaching the Gaza conflict. By backing Trump’s Comprehensive Plan, the Security Council effectively endorsed a framework shaped by Washington, thereby strengthening the US’s diplomatic weight in the region. The resolution also gives the proposed ISF a formal mandate, something many states had been waiting for before committing troops or resources.<sup>27</sup> With this in place, broader participation becomes more likely, making the force appear genuinely international rather than simply an extension of US or Western policy.

For Israel, the resolution offers clear political and security gains. It provides international legitimacy for a phased withdrawal from Gaza but ties that process to verified demilitarisation—an outcome that fits with Israel’s long-standing security demands.<sup>28</sup> A global force should also reduce Israel’s security responsibilities inside Gaza. At the same time, the resolution indirectly links stability in Gaza to renewed discussions about Palestinian statehood, a political direction Israel has repeatedly resisted.<sup>29</sup>

For Arab states, the plan offers a structured way to stabilise Gaza after years of conflict. It provides a framework for coordinating humanitarian aid, reconstruction funding and political engagement while reducing the risk of spillover violence. This aligns with the Arab League’s March 2025 initiative, which proposed an “early

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<sup>24</sup> State of Palestine MFA, [“The State of Palestine welcomes the statement issued on 14 November...”](#), X (formerly Twitter), 14 November 2025.

<sup>25</sup> [“Hamas Rejects UN Gaza Resolution, Says International Force Would Become Party to Conflict”](#), *Reuters*, 18 November 2025.

<sup>26</sup> [“Tehran Condemns UN Gaza Resolution Over Violation of Palestinian Rights”](#), *Tehran Times*, 19 November 2025.

<sup>27</sup> [“Egypt Expected to Lead Global Stabilisation Force in Gaza, Say Diplomats”](#), *The Guardian*, 18 October 2025; [“Indonesia Seeks Strong UN Oversight for Gaza Peacekeeping”](#), *The Jakarta Post*, 10 November 2025; [“UAE Refuses to Join Gaza Stabilisation Force Without Clear Legal Framework”](#), *The Guardian*, 10 November 2025; [“Jordan, Germany Say Gaza’s International Stabilization Force Will Need UN Mandate”](#), *The Times of Israel*, 1 November 2025.

<sup>28</sup> [“PM Netanyahu’s Statement on the UN Security Council’s Resolution on President Trump’s Gaza Plan”](#), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Israel, 18 November 2025.

<sup>29</sup> [“Amid New Hope in Gaza, Security Council Must Seize ‘Fragile’ Moment to Advance 20-Point Peace Plan, Chart Better Future for Israelis, Palestinians”](#), United Nations, 24 November 2025.

recovery, reconstruction, and development” plan for Gaza.<sup>30</sup> Egypt plays a critical role, expected to lead in border management, security coordination, and the training of Palestinian police forces, giving it significant influence over the plan's implementation.<sup>31</sup>

Qatar's role focuses on maintaining the ceasefire and ensuring its mediation remains central to the political track. By securing a key position in the peace process, Qatar can shape post-conflict arrangements and maintain leverage in regional diplomacy.<sup>32</sup> Saudi Arabia and the UAE, while not frontline mediators, can influence the post-war environment through financial and diplomatic support. They also support Hamas's disarmament and a credible path towards a two-state solution, both of which align with their regional interests and objectives.<sup>33</sup>

Although Israel opposes a Turkish military presence in Gaza, Resolution 2803 provides Turkey with an opportunity to assert influence in the region through non-military means. By serving as a guarantor of the ceasefire and participating in the political and reconstruction processes, Turkey can expand its diplomatic and humanitarian role.<sup>34</sup> This allows Turkey to shape the implementation of the peace plan, maintain a central role in regional negotiations, and enhance its regional leadership.

For Palestinians, the political implications are more mixed. The plan promises reconstruction, increased humanitarian access, and the possibility of a future political horizon. But it also introduces strict security requirements and shifts administrative authority to an international body, raising concerns about the future of Palestinian institutions.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, the Palestinian Authority views the resolution as a first step towards peace in Gaza,<sup>36</sup> while Hamas opposes it. This divide could deepen tensions between the PA and Hamas and raise concerns that Gaza may come under international oversight rather than progress towards genuine statehood.

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<sup>30</sup> [“Cairo Statement and Arab Plan Adopted at the League of Arab States Summit for Early Recovery, Reconstruction and Development in Gaza – Letter from Bahrain”](#), United Nations, 11 March 2025.

<sup>31</sup> Amr Hamzawy, [“The Gaza Plan Just Hit a Crucial Juncture. Egypt Is Critical for Its Success”](#), Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 20 November 2025.

<sup>32</sup> [“Qatar Urges Swift Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution, Full Israeli Withdrawal from Gaza”, Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#), State of Qatar, 22 November 2025.

<sup>33</sup> Jennifer Holleis, [“What Role for Arab Powers in Shaping Postwar Gaza?”](#), Deutsche Welle, 17 November 2025.

<sup>34</sup> Daniel C. Kurtzer and Kayra Sener, [“Whether It Puts Boots on the Round or Not, Turkey Matters for Gaza’s Stabilization”](#), Atlantic Council, 25 November 2025.

<sup>35</sup> [“Amid New Hope in Gaza, Security Council Must Seize ‘Fragile’ Moment to Advance 20-Point Peace Plan, Chart Better Future for Israelis, Palestinians”](#), note 29.

<sup>36</sup> [“UN Plan Just ‘First Step’ Toward Peace in Gaza, Says Palestinian Foreign Minister”](#), *The Guardian*, 18 November 2025.



The resolution also challenges Iran’s regional influence. By requiring a fully demilitarised Gaza and excluding Hamas from governance unless it renounces armed struggle, it limits the reach of Tehran-aligned groups. The presence of an international force would further restrict the operational space for Iranian-backed actors.

## Operational Challenges and Risks of Implementation

Beyond political reactions, the resolution faces substantial practical challenges, especially regarding the mandate and viability of the ISF. For instance, the UN’s authorisation for the ISF to “use all necessary measures” to demilitarise Gaza gives the force vast powers. The ISF is responsible for removing Hamas from power, securing Gaza’s borders, and supporting the deployment of vetted Palestinian police. The force also protects humanitarian operations and oversees the decommissioning of weapons. However, many operational details remain unclear. These uncertainties will affect whether the mission succeeds and whether states are willing to contribute forces.

First, rules of engagement, troop numbers, funding and deployment zones are not clearly defined. It is unclear whether forces will operate in Hamas-controlled areas, Israeli-occupied zones, or neutral buffer areas. This ambiguity raises questions about the mission’s practical scope and feasibility. Similarly, the UN estimates that rebuilding Gaza will require around US\$ 70 billion.<sup>37</sup> However, the resolution provides only general guidance on funding. It states that money should come from voluntary contributions and that the World Bank and other financial institutions are expected to help mobilise these resources.

Second, the Board of Peace (BoP) is assigned both coordination and governing responsibilities, including reconstruction, aid management and institution-building. Yet the resolution does not specify its composition, decision-making process, or mechanisms for legitimacy. This may hinder cooperation from local Palestinian actors, especially given perceptions of foreign control under a US-led body.

Third, Hamas has rejected the resolution, arguing that the demilitarisation requirement makes the ISF a party to the conflict rather than a neutral actor. Without Hamas’s cooperation, disarmament could be extremely difficult and potentially violent.

Fourth, while the resolution envisions the Palestinian Authority eventually resuming control, the criteria for reforms are vague, and it is unclear who will evaluate them. The PA’s current political weakness raises questions about its ability to assume governance effectively after the BoP’s term.

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<sup>37</sup> [“Gaza: \\$70 billion Needed to Rebuild Shattered Enclave, Says UN”](#), United Nations, 14 October 2025.



Fifth, the “credible pathway” to Palestinian statehood is conditional and symbolic, providing Israel with diplomatic cover while leaving Palestinians dependent on external benchmarks.

Sixth, accountability and oversight remain limited. The BoP reports to the Security Council every six months, but no independent mechanism exists to monitor mission creep, human rights abuses, or misuse of force.

Finally, Resolution 2803 conflicts with earlier UN resolutions on the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories.<sup>38</sup> It also conflicts with the ICJ’s October 2025 Advisory Opinion, which requires Israel to allow unhindered humanitarian aid to be delivered through UN agencies.<sup>39</sup> By giving the Board of Peace control over aid entry and distribution, the resolution sidelines existing UN mechanisms.

## Conclusion

Resolution 2803 represents an ambitious effort to reshape Gaza’s political and security landscape, but its prospects for success remain deeply uncertain. While it establishes a formally endorsed framework for ceasefire monitoring, reconstruction and transitional governance, its practical foundations are fragile. Key uncertainties include states’ willingness to contribute troops and to provide sustained funding. The Board of Peace will face significant challenges in securing local legitimacy, as it excludes Hamas from the peace process. The Palestinian Authority is currently unable to assume meaningful governance responsibilities, and Hamas’s likely resistance threatens to undermine the resolution’s core assumptions from the outset.

These challenges are compounded by limited UN oversight of both the International Stabilisation Force and the Board of Peace. Without robust monitoring, there is a high risk of accountability gaps and potential misuse of force or political power. Under these conditions, the resolution may do more harm than good. Rather than fostering stability or political progress, it could impose a transitional arrangement with little local support. It may deepen Palestinian political divisions and create new sources of tension on the ground. Instead of offering a credible path towards peace, the plan risks reinforcing the perception that Gaza’s future is being shaped without meaningful Palestinian participation.

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<sup>38</sup> Relevant resolutions include: UNSC 242 (1967), UNSC 338 (1973), UNGA 67/19 (2012), UNSC 2334 (2016), and UNSC 1860, 2712, 2720, and 2728.

<sup>39</sup> [“Obligations of Israel in Relation to the Presence and Activities of the United Nations, Other International Organizations and Third States in and in Relation to the Occupied Palestinian Territory”](#), International Court of Justice, 22 October 2025.

## About the Author



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