

MP-IDSA *Issue Brief*

Situation in Gaza post-October 2025 Ceasefire

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Summary

An incomplete ceasefire, stalled reconstruction efforts and non-operational civilian government characterise the current situation in Gaza. Hamas' rejection of complete disarmament, Israel's continued military actions and expansion of the buffer zone have led to an impasse in the Gaza peace plan's second phase, prolonging the humanitarian crisis.

Introduction

US President Donald Trump’s 20-point peace plan announced on 29 September 2025 facilitated an Israel– Hamas ceasefire, ending full-scale conflict. Despite the ceasefire, progress towards tangible peace and rehabilitation has stalled due to Israel’s ongoing attacks leading to around 1,000 Palestinian deaths between October 2025 and June 2026,¹ its refusal to withdraw and expand the buffer zone from the agreed 53 per cent to 64 per cent.² During the same period, five IDF soldiers were killed, including one in a friendly fire incident.³

Hamas continues to reject complete disarmament, while recurrent clashes between the group and Israel-backed Palestinian armed factions have aggravated the security situation. The humanitarian crisis has persisted amid repeated closures of key crossings, surging food prices, and restrictions on dual-use items, equipment, mechanical spare parts, and medicine, with 90 per cent of the population living in tent sites lacking reliable access to water, sanitation and electricity.⁴

The US’ peace plan envisages a three-phase process for Gaza’s rehabilitation. The first phase encompassed ceasefire, hostages-prisoners swap and IDF retreat to Yellow Line controlling 53 per cent; the second phase is centred on Hamas’ demilitarisation, transitional government and Israeli pullback to 40 per cent and third phase is focused on Hamas’ complete disarmament, reconstruction, IDF’s security perimeter spanning 15 per cent, governance under reformed Palestinian Authority (PA) and pathway to self-determination and statehood.

On 16 January 2026, Trump announced the second phase of the plan to initiate Hamas’ disarmament and dismantle its military and tunnel infrastructure, facilitate Israeli withdrawal, establish a security mechanism and technocratic government and launch reconstruction. Israel consented to the plan after retrieving the last hostage, Ran Gvili’s return on 26 January 2026, formally fulfilling the first phase’s agreed-upon terms despite continuing attacks. The Board of Peace’s (BoP) Executive Board,⁵

¹ [“How Many Times Has Israel Violated The Gaza Ceasefire? Here Are The Numbers”](#), *Al Jazeera*, 10 June 2026.

² [“Netanyahu: Israel Controls Over Half of Gaza Strip, Have Given Order to Take 70% of It”](#), *The Jerusalem Post*, 28 May 2026.

³ [“6 Said Killed in Gaza Strikes As Hamas Health Ministry Says War Toll Surpasses 73,000”](#), *The Times of Israel*, 14 June 2026.

⁴ [“Despite Ceasefire Gains, Gazans Trapped in Humanitarian Nightmare, Briefers Warn, As Security Council Speakers Demand Unhindered Aid Access, Respect For Peace Plan”](#), United Nations, 18 June 2026.

⁵ The executive board members are President Donald Trump, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, US Deputy National Security Advisor Robert Gabriel, US Special Envoy Steve Witkoff, Jared Kushner, Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Apollo Global Management CEO Marc Rowan, World Bank President Ajay Banga. See Mariel Ferragamo, [“A Guide to the Gaza Peace Deal”](#), Council on Foreign Relations, 24 February 2026.

Gaza Executive Board,⁶ National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG), and Office of High Representative for Gaza were established on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum summit in Davos on 22 January 2026.

The BoP and its sub-bodies are tasked with implementing the 20-point peace plan, consolidating the ceasefire and preventing renewed conflict, strengthening governance capacity-building, mobilising resources and investments, overseeing reconstruction, facilitating aid, and ensuring accountability for governance, reconstruction, and redevelopment until a reformed PA can assume its responsibilities in Gaza.⁷

The board's inaugural meeting in Washington, DC, on 19 February 2026 was attended by 50 states, with 27 joining the board and 23, including India, participating as observers. President Trump announced US\$ 10 billion in funding commitments, in addition to US\$ 7 billion from the UAE, Bahrain, Morocco, Qatar, Kuwait, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.⁸ The Palestinian-led technocrat committee, NCAG, led by Dr Ali Shaath, was established as an alternative to Hamas to restore essential services such as electricity, water, healthcare, and education, rebuild civil institutions, and support long-term, self-sustaining governance.

Most members are independent professionals from Gaza unaffiliated with Hamas or the PA, although some have ties to Fatah.⁹ Former Bulgarian Minister and UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nickolay Mladenov, was appointed as the High Representative for Gaza. His office links the BoP with the NCAG, coordinates civilian and security tracks, and leads negotiations with Hamas on phased disarmament and with Israel on political transition parameters, including potential amnesty arrangements for Palestinian fighters.¹⁰

In the security arena, the International Stabilisation Force (ISF), headed by General Jasper Jeffers, was established to serve as the primary security force in Gaza to

⁶ Gaza Executive Board established to support effective governance, deliver services boosting peace, stability, prosperity for Palestinians included Steve Witkoff, Jared Kushner, Nickolay Mladenov, Tony Blair, Marc Rowan, Israeli real estate businessman Yakir Gabay, Former Deputy Prime Minister of Netherlands Sigrid Kaag, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, Qatari Minister of Strategic Affairs Ali al-Thawadi, Emirati Minister of State for International Cooperation Reem al-Hashimy and Chief of Egyptian Intelligence Hassan Rashad. See Mariel Ferragamo, [“A Guide to the Gaza Peace Deal”](#), no. 5; [“Statement On President Trump’s Comprehensive Plan To End The Gaza Conflict”](#), The White House, 16 January 2026.

⁷ Nickolay Mladenov, [“Board of Peace High Representative For Gaza Briefs The Security Council”](#), United Nations, 21 May 2026.

⁸ [“Board of Peace Convenes Inaugural Meeting”](#), Board of Peace, 19 February 2026.

⁹ Jack Khoury and Liza Rozovsky, [“Egypt Says Consensus Reached On Gaza Technocratic Committee As Sources Say Most Members Not Hamas Or PA”](#), *Haaretz*, 14 January 2026.

¹⁰ [“Gaza Plan Phase Two: US to Discuss Hamas Disarmament, Israeli Withdrawal”](#), *Al Jazeera*, 15 January 2026; Mohammad Mansour, [“Who is Nickolay Mladenov, The Diplomat Tasked With ‘Disarming Gaza’?”](#), *Al Jazeera*, 15 January 2026.

replace the IDF, conduct security operations, facilitate comprehensive demilitarisation through decommissioning, weapons buybacks, and reintegration programmes, and enable the safe delivery of humanitarian aid and construction materials.¹¹ During the Davos summit, US Special Envoy Jared Kushner presented a ‘New Gaza’ master plan to facilitate economic transformation into a regional economic hub by 2035, focusing on coastal redevelopment, building 180 towers; new infrastructure including an airport, seaport, freight rail-line and tri-lateral crossing at Rafah, roads; industrial zones generating 500,000 jobs in construction, manufacturing, digital sectors, six-phase urban expansion.¹² However, since the announcements in early 2026, the ISF is yet to materialise, funding commitments remain largely unmet, reconstruction efforts have not commenced, and the new Palestinian administration remains non-operational.

Fate of Palestinians in Gaza

Palestinian representation within BoP’s framework remains confined to NCAG, with limited autonomy, influence and enforcement mechanisms.¹³ The NCAG may face significant operational constraints and pressure to align with Israeli and US preferences, including endorsing real estate initiatives that prioritise investment interests over Gaza’s rehabilitation and economic development. Major uncertainties persist regarding NCAG’s capacity to build public trust, secure funding, cover reconstruction and operational costs, support economic recovery, and ensure timely on-the-ground implementation. Moreover, armed groups and competing political actors operating under fragmented security conditions in IDF- and Hamas-controlled areas could undermine the NCAG’s authority, obstruct implementation, deepen instability and weaken public legitimacy. These challenges are compounded by doubts over Hamas’ genuine willingness to transfer power and Israel’s limited interest in NCAG’s governance process, necessitating withdrawal from Gaza.¹⁴

Israeli opposition to interim Palestinian governance and unresolved questions over Gaza’s political status have constrained reconstruction efforts. Currently, NCAG’s

¹¹ The US, Indonesia, Morocco, Kazakhstan, Kosovo and Albania have committed to provide troops to ISF. Egypt and Jordan agreed to provide training to the police force. See Lyndal Rowlands, [“Indonesia, Morocco, Kosovo Among 5 Countries to Send Troops Under Gaza Plan”](#), *Al Jazeera*, 20 February 2026; Sam Metz, [“There are Supposed to be Ceasefires Across the Middle East, But the Fighting is Worsening”](#), *AP News*, 3 June 2026.

¹² Amichai Stein, [“Jared Kushner Unveils \\$25 Billion Plan to Transform Gaza into Economic Hub by 2035”](#), *The Jerusalem Post*, 22 January 2026.

¹³ Liza Rozovsky, [“Netanyahu Criticizes Trump Over Gaza Board of Peace Staffing, Says He Was Not Consulted; Source: The Rebuke is for Show”](#), *Haaretz*, 17 January 2026.

¹⁴ Jack Khoury, [“Gazans Follow The Progress of Trump’s Board of Peace With Both Hope and Skepticism”](#), *Haaretz*, 19 January 2026; Julian Borger, [“Trump’s Gaza Plan is a Rebuff to Israeli Extremists, But Will Soon Be Put To Test”](#), *The Guardian*, 22 January 2026.

stationing in Gaza remains uncertain, as committee members reject operating under IDF's security arrangements, cooperating with Israeli-backed militias, or entering Gaza before ISF deployment.¹⁵ Given the limited scope for Palestinian self-governance, a 'reformed' PA accepted by Israel would operate within a constrained administrative framework managed by regional and international actors. At the same time, a lightly armed Hamas assumes an internal regulatory role, and Israel retains overall control.¹⁶

The New Gaza plan promises economic transformation and urban development by erasing the numerous existing neighbourhoods, historic sites and landmarks integral to Gaza's identity and history. The key issues remain unresolved, including property and land rights, house allocation policy, population relocation from existing buildings and engineering feasibility. The proposal in its current format has prioritised investment-led redevelopment over local reconstruction and spatial restructuring through demolition and rezoning, replacing existing communities without consultation. Critics fear the possibility of the creation of exclusive zones transforming Gaza's social and urban fabric and gradual demographic and economic reconfiguration that normalises population reduction as a redevelopment imperative.¹⁷

Israel is unlikely to accept key elements of the New Gaza Plan, including a port and an airport, given its security concerns. Moreover, the proposed high-rise buildings could provide vantage points overlooking Israeli border communities and IDF bases. The port's feasibility is contingent on Israel's consent, requiring close coordination with the IDF and robust supervision and enforcement mechanisms to curb smuggling and infiltration of militias.¹⁸ Notably, the Rafah crossing under the plan would be relocated to Gaza's southern tip and redesigned as a "trilateral crossing" connected to both Egypt and Israel, potentially expanding Israeli oversight of Gaza's external access, trade flows and strategic connectivity.¹⁹ In case of ISF that remains non-operational, key challenges include scope of its mandate to enforce disarmament

¹⁵ Jack Khoury and Liza Rozovsky, ["Egypt Says Consensus Reached On Gaza Technocratic Committee As Sources Say Most Members Not Hamas Or PA"](#), no. 9.

¹⁶ Hafez Ghanem, ["Order from Chaos: Foreign Policy in a Troubled World"](#), Brookings, 12 February 2026.

¹⁷ Tariq Kenney-Shawa, ["Jared Kushner's 'Plan' for Gaza is an Abomination"](#), *The Nation*, 30 January 2026; Mohammed Haddad and Mohammad Mansour, ["Map Shows What Would Happen to Gaza Under the US 'Master Plan'"](#), *Al Jazeera*, 27 January 2026.

¹⁸ Nick Duffy and Matt Bradley, ["Jared Kushner's Vision For Gaza as a Gleaming Port City Clashes With Reality"](#), *NBC News*, 24 January 2026; Aya Batrawy, ["What Jared Kushner's 'New Gaza' Plan Includes, and What It Leaves Out"](#), *NPR*, 2 February 2026.

¹⁹ Yaniv Kubovich and Jonathan Lis, ["IDF Officials Say Trump Gaza Plan Strengthens Hamas, Undermines Israel's Security Needs"](#), *Haaretz*, 19 January 2025.

rejected by Hamas, alongside Israel’s continued troop deployment, expansion of buffer zone, and reluctance to commit to a withdrawal timeline.²⁰

Israel’s Stance

For Israel, security gaps persist due to Hamas fighters’ refusal to disarm and its power consolidation post-October 2025 ceasefire. Israel’s stated strategic objectives, i.e., an end to Hamas’ rule, disarmament and destruction of the group’s military capabilities, remain relevant. Since the launch of the second phase, the Netanyahu government has resisted transitioning from military operations to a political settlement by continuing attacks, delaying, hardening terms and creating new circumstances.

Israel has increased control by unilaterally moving the concrete blocks marking the Yellow Line into Hamas-controlled territory and conducting demolitions, expanding to 64 per cent with plans to reach 70 per cent.²¹ Between 11 October 2025 and 9 June 2026, Israel reportedly carried out 3,201 military actions in Gaza, including air, artillery and direct shootings. Across the 243 days following the October 2025 ceasefire, military activity occurred on 218 days, alongside the detention of around 83 Palestinians. Aid access remained inconsistent due to Israeli restrictions, with only 52,129 trucks entering Gaza out of an allocated 144,000, roughly 36 per cent of the planned deliveries.²²

Amid the US–Israel axis’ war on Iran since 28 February 2026, the IDF has intensified its attacks, withheld food and medical supplies, with transit of trucks reduced to 20 per cent, and suspended medical evacuations from the territory.²³ IDF has escalated the targeted assassinations of Hamas leaders to destabilise its decision-making structure, constrain its ability to reconstitute and maintain pressure to disarm.²⁴ Netanyahu government seeks to "manage the conflict" in Gaza, avoiding politically

²⁰ Mariel Ferragamo, [“A Guide to the Gaza Peace Deal”](#), no. 5.

²¹ [“Netanyahu: Israel Controls Over Half of Gaza Strip, Have Given Order to Take 70% of It”](#), no. 2.

²² [“How Many Times Has Israel Violated The Gaza Ceasefire? Here Are The Numbers”](#), no. 1.

²³ Alia Chughtai and Marium Ali, [“Israel Bombed Gaza on 36 of the Past 40 Days While the War Raged in Iran”](#), *Al Jazeera*, 9 April 2026; Nasser Khdour and Sherwan Hindreen Ali, [“Middle East Overview: June 2026”](#), ACLED, 5 June 2026.

²⁴ Key Hamas leaders killed between March and June 2026 include Qassem Brigades head, Izz al-Din al-Haddad on 15 May and his successor, Mohammed Odeh on 26 May, General Security Service deputy head, Hassan Rabah Labad, Commanders Asim Shubair, Abdullaha Abu Kloub and Mohammed Abu Mark on 4 June and Saleh Ramadan Muhammad Khalifa and Muhammad Musa Diab al-Habil on 15 June. Eugenia Yosef and Ibrahim Dahman, [“Israel Kills Most Senior Hamas Military Leader in Gaza Strike”](#), *CNN*, 16 May 2026; [“Hamas Confirms Israel Killed Its Military Wing Chief in Gaza Strike”](#), *Al Jazeera*, 27 May 2026; [“Israel Claims Senior Hamas Security Officials Killed in Gaza Strike”](#), *Yeni Safak*, 4 June 2026; [“IDF Kills Two Hamas Terrorists in Separate Gaza Strikes”](#), *The Jerusalem Post*, 15 June 2026.

costly measures such as IDF withdrawal and meaningful Palestinian self-governance that remain unpopular among its right-wing voter base, thereby sustaining a perpetual war of attrition.²⁵ It remains uncertain whether dismantling Hamas’ leadership structure would moderate its position on disarmament. So far, Israeli military escalation has not produced decisive changes on the ground.

In the absence of a clear strategic outcome, the government has framed tactical battlefield gains across multiple fronts as incremental steps towards the repeatedly promised “total victory”. In the coming months, the IDF may pursue renewed large-scale operations premised on decisive victory under conditions in which Hamas no longer retains hostages as leverage, risking further displacement and civilian casualties. At present, developments in Gaza remain closely tied to President Trump’s priorities focused on securing a successful deal with Iran. He has reportedly not yet endorsed a renewed offensive.²⁶

Israel has maintained a firm position on the demilitarisation issue, particularly removing rockets, advanced weaponry, domestic production capabilities and Hamas’ command structure. In light of the upcoming elections, any party that assumes power would remain inflexible on dismantling Hamas’ military capabilities. Prime Minister Netanyahu, based on Hamas’ refusal to disarm, is therefore reshaping the ceasefire terms and stalling progress in negotiations for domestic political gains ahead of the upcoming elections in late 2026.²⁷

For Israel, the dilemma remains between renewing full-scale military operations and relying on ISF willing to confront Hamas. Israel opposes incorporating Hamas’ estimated 10,000-member police force into Gaza’s new governance structure, arguing that it remains inseparable from the group’s wider security apparatus and would preserve its institutional influence despite administrative restructuring.²⁸ Israeli policy conditions reconstruction and troop withdrawal on Hamas’ disarmament and Gaza’s demilitarisation, while preserving long-term security control over Gaza and the West Bank. Post-October 2025 ceasefire, Hamas mobilised recruitment of fighters to reassert authority in areas vacated by the IDF, reinforcing Israeli scepticism over disarmament prospects. Despite Trump’s plan mandating

²⁵ [“Unless Trump Sees Through Israel’s Policy in Gaza, Phase Two Will Stay a Fantasy”](#), *Haaretz*, 18 January 2026.

²⁶ Amos Harel, [“Killing Hamas’ Military Chief in Gaza, Netanyahu Again Hails Tactical Success as Strategic Gain”](#), *Haaretz*, 16 May 2026; Jacob Magid, [“Board of Peace Won’t Hold Israel to Truce Terms If Hamas Doesn’t Okay Disarmament Offer”](#), *The Times of Israel*, 5 May 2026.

²⁷ Mohammad Mansour, [“Hamas Says Won’t Surrender Arms But Only Police Will Carry Weapons in Gaza”](#), *Al Jazeera*, 5 June 2026.

²⁸ Waseem Abu Mahadi, [“Why Does Hamas’ Mandatory Disarmament Remain So Elusive?”](#), *The Media Line*, 2 March 2026.

Hamas’ disarmament, Israeli policymakers remain convinced that the group is unlikely to relinquish its weapons.²⁹

Israel’s rejection of a post-war role for the PA in Gaza coupled with demands for extensive reforms has complicated efforts to establish a viable governing framework and contributed to external actors such as Türkiye and Qatar filling the political vacuum.³⁰ Türkiye, Qatar and Egypt seek to remain integral to the BoP framework to maximise their influence over Gaza’s future, reinforcing their regional relevance and strategic positioning in West Asian geopolitics.³¹ Israel has opposed inclusion of Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and Qatari diplomat Ali Thawadi on the Gaza Executive Board, viewing their proximity with Hamas as facilitating Hamas’ political rehabilitation and legitimisation.

In the post-7 October 2023 attack scenario, Israel is unwilling to accept a framework that allows Hamas-friendly actors to shape Gaza’s future. The US, however, views Ankara and Doha as critical guarantors of the Gaza peace plan, crediting both states with facilitating the October 2025 ceasefire and their role in the ongoing process to secure Hamas’ compliance. Washington also regards Ankara’s involvement as an opportunity to encourage broader regional de-escalation and renewed Turkish–Israeli engagement.³²

Disarmament

Hamas’ disarmament remains a major obstacle to implementing the peace plan. It views the weapons as key leverage due to lack of trust in US and Israeli guarantees. The group continues to link the weapons issue to full Israeli withdrawal, complete cessation of hostilities, uninterrupted flow of aid and goods, reconstruction, governance mechanism and pathway to statehood. Hamas perceive disarmament as a one-sided surrender, leaving the group defenceless, enabling political marginalisation, attacks by rival factions and loss of bargaining power.

Hamas Polit Bureau chair Khaled Meshaal argued that disarmament would leave the group as “an easy victim to be eliminated”, stressing the need to create an

²⁹ [“UNRWA Situation Report #197 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied West Bank, Including East Jerusalem”](#), United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, 18 November 2025.

³⁰ PA Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa argued that Israeli measures against Ramallah including withholding US\$ 4 billion, punitive measures on Palestinian banking system causing liquidity crisis, were hampering efforts to institute long-demanded reforms. See Jacob Magid, [“Arab Diplomat: Turkey, Qatar Filling Vacuum in Gaza Created by Israel’s Snub of PA”](#), *The Times of Israel*, 22 January 2026.

³¹ Jared Hillel, [“Why the Plan to Disarm Hamas is Destined to Fail”](#), *Responsible Statecraft*, 2 June 2026.

³² Jacob Magid, [“Arab Diplomat: Turkey, Qatar Filling Vacuum in Gaza Created by Israel’s Snub of PA”](#), no. 30.

environment that allows reconstruction, aid, and a lasting end to hostilities through dialogue mediated by Egypt, Qatar and Türkiye.³³ The group has asserted the disarmament issue as an internal Palestinian matter to be resolved through comprehensive inter-factional dialogue rather than external imposition.³⁴

During the second phase, Hamas’ key objectives are reopening and uninterrupted free passage through the Rafah crossing, control over aid distribution and initiating Israeli withdrawal. The BoP envisions the second phase to initiate dismantling of all military infrastructure in Gaza and depositing heavy weapons such as RPGs, rocket launchers and missiles. There are disagreements regarding the fate of the light weapons. Egypt, Qatar and Türkiye during talks with the US suggested launching a “buy-back” programme for light weapons. Israel is insistent on adding light weapons such as AK-47s in the disarmament programme, which Hamas widely utilises to exert control over Palestinians.³⁵

In late March 2026, Mladenov proposed a five-stage, eight-month process for the gradual disarmament of Hamas and other Palestinian groups.³⁶ Moreover, on 21 May 2026, he presented a 15-point roadmap to the UN Security Council (UNSC) based on reciprocity whereby each step by one side drives a step by the other, subject to verification by an independent committee. The plan envisions gradual, sequenced, time-bound decommissioning of weapons and their transfer to NCAG rather than Israel.³⁷

Israel is required to withdraw to Gaza’s perimeter on an agreed timetable gradually, permit ISF deployment to act as buffer, allow construction materials, increase aid flow and transfer administration to NCAG. Both March and May 2026 plans emphasised “one authority, one law, one weapon” by NCAG-authorized personnel,

³³ [**“Hamas Leader Rejects Disarmament While Israeli Occupation of Gaza Continues”**](#), *Al Jazeera*, 8 February 2026.

³⁴ The key Palestinian factions are Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), PFLP-General Command, the National Initiative, Popular Resistance Committees (PRC), and Democratic Reform Current affiliated with Fatah movement. [**“Hamas Hopes Pressure Will Amend Gaza Disarmament Plan”**](#), *Asharq Al-Awsat*, 4 April 2026.

³⁵ Jacob Magid, [**“US Bullish As Bodies Tasked With Replacing Hamas Take Shape, Despite Disarmament Hurdle”**](#), *The Times of Israel*, 15 January 2026.

³⁶ Under the five-stage plan, the first phase (two weeks) envisaged a complete cessation of hostilities by IDF and Hamas, implementation of humanitarian protocols, NCAG’s entry to assume security and administrative responsibilities. The second phase (Days 16–60) encompassed removal of heavy weapons from IDF and Hamas controlled areas, destruction of tunnel networks and Israeli consent for temporary pre-fabricated residential units. The third phase outlined IDF withdrawal to security perimeter following verification of Hamas’ disarmament by Weapons Collection Verification Committee. The fourth phase proposed complete weapons collection by NCAG-allied security forces by Day 251. The fifth phase is centered on full reconstruction and entry of “dual-use materials”, such as concrete, steel, fertilisers and fuel would be lifted. [**“Details Revealed of Board of Peace Plan for Gaza Disarmament”**](#), *Al Jazeera*, 26 May 2026.

³⁷ Nickolay Mladenov, [**“Board of Peace High Representative For Gaza Briefs the Security Council”**](#), United Nations, 21 May 2026.

and the complete termination of military activities by all armed factions, while temporarily permitting personal arms for safety until security and implementation milestones are met and verified.³⁸ Critics point to Mladenov’s alignment with Israeli and US vision by demanding disarmament without offering a clear political horizon for “the day after” in Gaza.

Hamas rejected both disarmament proposals, citing IDF’s continued military strikes, preservation and expansion of the buffer zone and the group’s competition with Israel-backed Palestinian factions. Hamas considers the proposals as a stalling tactic aimed at extracting concessions and exploiting “negotiation time” to exhaust Gaza’s population through escalation and territorial entrenchment.³⁹ Hamas so far has refused to accept surrender, viewing its armed resistance as necessary and justified. Due to the group’s bottom-up and decentralised structure and fluid decision-making, Israel’s strikes and targeted assassinations have been unable to paralyse or decapitate the group.

Following the October 2025 ceasefire, Hamas has consolidated control by building checkpoints, collecting taxes, managing basic services, reviving arms production, recruiting fighters and targeting Israel-backed factions.⁴⁰ The group’s acceptance of complete disarmament remains elusive due to its operative fluidity, less tangible internal opposition, substantial political consensus to preserve arms and popular recognition of Israel as the primary obstacle to Palestinian decision-making.⁴¹

On 2 June 2026, Hamas spokesperson Hazem Qassem affirmed its readiness to hand over all areas of governance, including security, to NCAG. Hamas dismissed claims of refusal to transfer governance as disinformation intended to justify further Israeli escalation. It accused Mladenov of obstructing the handover process and Israel of blocking the committee’s entry through the crossings.⁴² At the 9 June 2026 meeting in Cairo among Palestinian factions, barring Fatah, agreed in principle to transfer their weapons to a newly established ad hoc Palestinian entity.⁴³

Hamas’ proposal broadly encompasses an extended truce ranging from 7 to 10 years, a halt to all military operations including weapons development, tunnel building and

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ [“**Hamas Hopes Pressure Will Amend Gaza Disarmament Plan**”](#), *Asharq Al-Awsat*, 4 April 2026.

⁴⁰ Lazar Berman, [“**Trump’s Gaza Push is a Recipe For Hamas’s Revival, But Netanyahu is Unwilling to Stir the Pot**”](#), *The Times of Israel*, 20 January 2026.

⁴¹ Yazan Alhamdan, [“**Disarming Hamas: What Analysts Get Wrong**”](#), Arab Center, Washington DC, 2 March 2026; Yaniv Kubovich and Jonathan Lis, [“**IDF Officials Say Trump Gaza Plan Strengthens Hamas, Undermines Israel’s Security Needs**”](#), no. 19.

⁴² [“**Hamas Says Ready to Hand Over Governance in Gaza**”](#), *China Daily*, 3 June 2026.

⁴³ Mohammad Mansour, [“**Hamas Says Won’t Surrender Arms But Only Police Will Carry Weapons in Gaza**”](#), no. 27; [“**Rival Palestinian Factions Discuss Gaza Disarmament**”](#), *Al Arabiya*, 9 June 2026.

acceptance of NCAG’s governance and ISF deployment.⁴⁴ The group, rather than handing over weapons, assured non-use, non-visibility and non-production of weapons except for policing. International monitors could verify Hamas’ obligations, and NCAG would be authorised to arrest any individual who violates the planned policy.⁴⁵

Hamas’ efforts are aimed at maximising its leverage and preserving control over Gaza at the cost of delaying the peace plan. The group’s decision to condition disarmament on IDF withdrawal has served as a pretext for inaction, calculating that prolonged delay would favour its position. Hamas, by officially handing over governance to NCAG, encouraging administrative cooperation and maintaining control over communication channels, seeks to embed personnel within state and security institutions and retain an autonomous military capability, replicating the Hezbollah model in Lebanon.⁴⁶

The BoP’s focus on surface-level governance is unlikely to dismantle Hamas’ networks, instead creating an arrangement that serves international optics while perpetuating long-term instability and posing a renewed threat to Israel. It could therefore preserve its political and security influence by engaging with NCAG on a conditional basis while avoiding meaningful disarmament. Hamas recognises that Israel’s opposition to PA’s role in Gaza would allow it to exploit the resulting power vacuum and retain de facto control over Gaza.⁴⁷ The group’s mixed messaging on disarmament, ranging from outright rejection to temporary weapons storage, indicates tactical calculations rather than a genuine willingness to relinquish armed influence, thereby stalling long-term infrastructure and housing projects in areas under its control.⁴⁸

BoP’s Structural Issues

BoP’s critics have pointed to its personality-driven structure, dominated by Trump as lifetime chair, with authority over appointments and removals. He can only be removed by unanimous vote. The BoP’s budget, international agreements, and

⁴⁴ Faisal Ali, [“Hamas Has Its Own Disarmament Vision As Gaza Truce Enters Critical Phase”](#), *Al Jazeera*, 11 December 2025.

⁴⁵ Muhammad Shehada, [“Rescuing the Gaza Ceasefire: What to Do With Hamas’s Weapons”](#), European Council on Foreign Relations, 22 May 2026.

⁴⁶ Shaike Komorik, [“Trump’s Gaza Board of Peace: Vision or Mirage?”](#), *The Times of Israel*, 19 January 2026.

⁴⁷ Seth J. Frantzman, [“Gaza Ceasefire’s Catch-22: Hamas Delays Disarmament As It Calls for IDF Withdrawal – Analysis”](#), *The Jerusalem Post*, 9 December 2025.

⁴⁸ Amichai Stein, [“Board of Peace Won’t Wait for Hamas Response to Disarmament Plan, Source Tells Post”](#), *The Jerusalem Post*, 11 June 2026.

“peace-building initiatives” would be approved by a simple majority vote, subject to Trump’s ratification. Participating states seek to capitalise on a closer, more transactional relationship with the US. Although contributions are officially voluntary, Trump is likely to pressure members to contribute, with donors contributing US\$ 1 billion securing permanent membership and greater influence.

The BoP’s objectives, governance and financing model risk legitimising political loyalty and financial incentives over international law. The involvement of Aryeh Lightstone and Josh Gruenbaum as BoP advisors, associated with pro-settlement figures and the controversial Gaza Humanitarian Fund (GHF), alongside private investment interests, indicates a prioritisation of externally driven redevelopment and commercial objectives over Palestinian agency in political, economic, and security issues, reconstruction needs, and accountable governance.⁴⁹ Therefore, the fusion of private investment, US dominance, opaque decision-making and financial expenditure risks creating a system dominated by oligarchic interests and limited accountability.⁵⁰

The BoP, by nurturing a parallel mechanism, could challenge the United Nations (UN) based international order. Most European states, barring Hungary and Bulgaria, declined to participate, citing concerns over the scope of BoP’s charter and its implications for the multilateral, rules-based order.⁵¹ The plans to expand the BoP’s mandate beyond Gaza to address other conflicts, alongside Trump’s criticism of existing international institutions for not serving US interests, reflect an effort to reshape global conflict management. Critics warn that Trump-led BoP overseeing Gaza could amount to “a form of US guardianship”, resembling colonial patterns of external administration by institutionalising control under humanitarian rhetoric and providing diplomatic cover for Israeli policies.⁵²

The BoP’s US-dominated structure has raised concerns over neutrality, given Washington’s financial and military support for Israel and its limited response to IDF violations killing around 1,000 Palestinians between 11 October 2025 and 15 June 2026.⁵³ Mladenov signalled that truce terms would not bind Israeli actions until Hamas accepted the disarmament framework. Israel’s continued military actions and

⁴⁹ Hugh Lovatt, [“Welcome to the Jungle: Trump’s Board of Peace Goes Global”](#), European Council on Foreign Relations, 23 January 2026.

⁵⁰ Liza Rozovsky, [“To Join or Not to Join Trump’s Board of Peace? Gaza Plan Moves Ahead Without Netanyahu”](#), *Haaretz*, 18 January 2026; John Irish and Andreas Rinke, [“World Leaders Show Caution on Trump’s Broader ‘Board of Peace’ Amid Fears for UN”](#), *The Times of Israel*, 19 January 2026.

⁵¹ Hugh Lovatt, [“Welcome to the Jungle: Trump’s Board of Peace Goes Global”](#), no. 49.

⁵² Nagham Zbeedat, [“‘The Whole World United to Control Rubble’ Trump’s Board of Peace Finds Few Enthusiasts Among Palestinians in Gaza”](#), *Haaretz*, 18 January 2026.

⁵³ [“Israeli Military Takes More Territory, Kills Tow People in Gaza, Medics and Witnesses Say”](#), *Asharq Al-Awsat*, 16 June 2026.

BoP’s support for sequencing disarmament and tunnel dismantling before Israeli withdrawal, aid expansion and reconstruction have contributed to the present stalemate. Due to the absence of meaningful concessions and the perception of a biased guarantor, the process has produced ineffective de-commissioning proposals, opening space for renewed rearmament. The defective disarmament framework has justified Israel in escalating, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu repeatedly signalling readiness to resume military operations against Hamas.⁵⁴

The BoP rather than limiting Israel’s role in Gaza seeks to redistribute security and governance responsibilities to regional powers while preserving Israel’s control. Türkiye, Qatar and Egypt are assigned responsibilities in administration, reconstruction and conflict management. At the same time, Israel retains control over borders, airspace, maritime access and military intervention, without bearing the costs of direct occupation. Critics also argue that the plan perpetuates external dominance by reconfiguring governance from sovereignty to technocratic management through councils, funding conditionality, and security frameworks that prioritise stability over statehood. Gaza as an internationally managed unit would detach from the broader Palestinian national project, institutionalising administration without meaningful political agency or self-determination.⁵⁵

Conclusion

The Gaza peace plan, led by BoP and its sub-bodies to achieve full demilitarisation, reconstruction, and governance, remains trapped in political paralysis. The NCAG’s ability to win public trust and assume governance responsibilities promptly remains uncertain. Doubts over Hamas’ genuine willingness to transfer power and Israel’s limited interest in the NCAG-led governance process have further impeded progress.

The reconstruction process based on Jared Kushner’s New Gaza plan entails drastic redevelopment altering Gaza’s identity and geography. It has raised questions about property rights, allocation mechanisms, engineering feasibility and the possibility of thinning Gaza’s population. Israel is sceptical about proposals for a seaport, an airport and high-rise buildings, citing security risks.

For Israel, security concerns persist over Hamas’ reconsolidation in Gaza and refusal to complete disarmament. Israel’s insistence on demilitarisation as a pre-condition for reconstruction, continued military pressure, opposition to Türkiye and Qatar’s inclusion in the rehabilitation process, reluctance to delegate authority to PA in its

⁵⁴ Jared Hillel, [“Why the Plan to Disarm Hamas is Destined to Fail”](#), no. 31.

⁵⁵ Mahmoud Shehada, [“Israel isn’t Leaving Gaza. It’s Rebranding Its Control of the Strip”](#), *Haaretz*, 26 January 2026.

current form and rejection of a pathway towards Palestinian statehood have constrained prospects for sustainable peace.

For Hamas, complete disarmament is viewed as an existential threat that could lead to political marginalisation and loss of bargaining power. It has tied disarmament to full Israeli withdrawal, permanent cessation of hostilities, uninterrupted aid flow and a political horizon towards statehood. Hamas has proposed a long-term truce with Israel, a halt to combat operations and weapons development and agreed to hand over governance, including security, to NCAG. After NCAG assumes governance responsibilities, Hamas could wield decisive power behind the scenes and undermine stabilisation efforts.

The absence of effective Palestinian representation and a credible governance alternative to Hamas complicates post-war recovery. Disarmament is unlikely to succeed without addressing ceasefire consolidation, withdrawal arrangements, security guarantees, third-party monitoring, humanitarian access, and inclusive governance. Therefore, reconstruction plans remain a technocratic exercise detached from political realities. Moreover, Trump-led BoP's personality-driven structure, challenge to the multi-lateral world order and perceptions of pro-Israel bias have weakened the board's legitimacy and slowed implementation. Palestinians remain under-represented in the post-conflict decision-making structure.

Israel is seeking to renew a full-scale operation against Hamas, which remains unlikely without US approval. Due to Israel's dissatisfaction with the Iran deal, the US could offer leeway to the Netanyahu government to pursue its incomplete strategic objectives in Gaza. Israel is likely to apply pressure on Hamas through targeted attacks, territorial expansion and aid restrictions, which will undoubtedly prolong the ongoing crisis.

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