



### [Gaza Takeover Proposal Sparks Global and Domestic Repudiation](#)

President Trump has drawn both global and domestic condemnation for his recently unveiled Gaza takeover proposal, in which he suggested that the United States take “ownership” of the Gaza Strip and redevelop it while displaced Palestinians there be permanently resettled outside of the territory. Trump made the remarks at a joint press conference with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, who is visiting the U.S. this week despite an existing International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrant against him for war crimes and grave human rights violations. The idea floated by Trump is problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly, the forced mass displacement of civilians from Gaza would amount to a severe violation of international law and a crime against humanity, with some observers equating it to ethnic cleansing. Additionally, it would be a further violation for the United States to permanently take over the territory of Gaza. Doing so would also serve to deeply embroil the U.S. in the Middle East – something that runs counter to Trump’s pledges to keep the nation out of foreign entanglements.

Countries in the Middle East and around the world reacted to Trump’s remarks on Gaza with sharp disapproval and rebuke. Saudi Arabia’s foreign ministry expressed that it rejected any attempts to displace the Palestinians from their land, while Egypt stressed the importance of moving forward with recovery projects in Gaza without Palestinians leaving the territory. Among some of the United States’ main allies in Europe, France reiterated its opposition to any forced displacement of Gaza’s Palestinian population, noting that it would constitute a serious violation of international law and be a source of major destabilization in the region. Germany emphasized that mass displacement would be a breach of international law, and pointed out that it would only serve to fuel animosity and worsen humanitarian suffering. A plethora of other nations in Europe and elsewhere including the United Kingdom, China, Turkey, Brazil, Ireland, and Spain issued strong-worded statements opposing the proposal put forth by Trump as well. Domestically within the United States, a bipartisan group of lawmakers also slammed the president’s comments. U.S. Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA), a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, called the idea “deranged” and highlighted that American military presence in the region would be “a magnet for trouble.” Furthermore, U.S. Representative Mike Quigley (D-IL) remarked that he was “appalled” by the proposal, and U.S. Senator Rand Paul (R-KY) criticized it saying “I thought we voted for America First...We have no business contemplating yet another occupation to doom our treasure and spill our soldiers’ blood.” U.S. Senator Thom Tillis (R-NC) added that “I don’t know under what circumstance it would make sense even,” while U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) stated that “Trump’s proposal to push two million Palestinians out of Gaza and take ‘ownership’ by force, if necessary, is simply ethnic cleansing by another name.”

On top of President Trump’s controversial and outlandish Gaza takeover proposal, denunciation has also been aimed at Netanyahu’s visit itself to the United States this week. Understandably, rights groups and activists have been highly critical of this – the first trip by a foreign leader to the U.S. since Trump’s inauguration. Amnesty International lamented Netanyahu being welcomed to the White House and outlined how the U.S. is undermining international justice by hosting him amid the existing ICC arrest warrant that was issued back in late November. The group has previously deemed that the Israeli government is [committing genocide](#) by way of its military operations in Gaza. Under Netanyahu, Israel is facing a genocide case at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) as well for its conduct during the Gaza War. Other rights organizations have expressed that Netanyahu should be held accountable, not celebrated, and warned that Trump’s support of him diminishes peace efforts. Human rights

attorneys have argued that the invitation of Netanyahu is not only disrespectful to Palestinians, but it is also evidence that Trump has no interest in the rule of law. The fact that the leader of the United States – a country founded on the ideals of justice and liberty – is inviting an individual charged with egregious crimes against humanity into the Oval Office is extremely troubling.

In addition to all of this, yesterday Trump signed an executive order imposing sanctions on the ICC over its investigations into Israel. The move has been met with condemnation from several U.S. allies, including Germany, the Netherlands, Canada, and France. The European Council and the United Nations also criticized the decision, emphasizing that the sanctions undermine the international criminal justice system and the court's independence. Last month, the U.S. House of Representatives had voted to sanction the ICC, but the bill was blocked in the U.S. Senate. In response to Trump's action, the ICC has stated that it is undeterred and has vowed to continue its impartial work.

The main agenda points for Trump's meeting with Netanyahu was slated to include discussion on the ceasefire agreement in Gaza as negotiations take place regarding the second phase of the deal, the prospect of normalizing relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia, and the situation with Iran. It remains to be seen how Trump's widely condemned remarks on Gaza potentially impact the already fragile ceasefire agreement in Gaza, particularly in the midst of negotiations on the second phase. Coming out of the meeting with Netanyahu, Trump stated that he would "[restore a maximum pressure policy](#)" on Iran that the White House says will be brought to fruition through economic sanctions. With respect to the prospect of a normalization deal between Israel and Saudi Arabia, the latter has consistently expressed that this is a nonstarter without concrete steps towards Palestinian statehood – a position that Saudi Arabia has said is "firm, steadfast, and unwavering." Both Trump and Netanyahu have relayed a desire to bring Saudi Arabia into the fold on the Abraham Accords, even as the existing deals have been criticized for trying to sideline and ignore the issue of social justice for Palestinians – something that must be appropriately addressed in order to truly bring stability to the Middle East.

On Thursday of this week, President Trump reiterated his panned suggestion that Palestinians should be displaced from Gaza. This followed a Wednesday afternoon press conference in which White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt appeared to walk back some of Trump's earlier statements, as she remarked that the proposal called for "a temporary resettlement of Palestinians." Recently, news also broke that Israel's defense minister had instructed the military to prepare a plan "to allow Palestinians to voluntarily leave the Gaza Strip" after officials embraced Trump's widely condemned Gaza takeover proposal.