



Trump Peace Plan for Gaza: Is It a Workable Plan?

This week, U.S. President Donald Trump presented a peace plan for ending the war in Gaza, as the conflict nears its two-year mark. The framework agreement was unveiled during Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's visit to the White House and incorporated significant last-minute changes requested by him – infuriating Arab officials involved in the earlier negotiation process for the plan with Trump, which was developed over the span of the preceding weeks. The controversial edits that were incorporated dealt in particular with the conditions and timetable surrounding Israel's withdrawal from Gaza, eliciting concern that Israeli forces will push to remain there indefinitely. The plan allows Israel to have veto power during the military withdrawal phases. Then, even after this is potentially completed, it calls for a "security perimeter" around Gaza maintained by Israeli forces until the territory is "secure from any resurgent terror threat" – a vague and arbitrary determination that fair-minded analysts fear could be used to try and justify continued Israeli military presence.

One of the other main aspects of the plan that has prompted unease over its workability and chances of success is the concern that it leaves the door open for Israel to resume its destructive military operations in Gaza at any time. The aforementioned Israeli veto power gives the Netanyahu government the ability to renege on the deal and reinstate military hostilities – as it did back in March when it unilaterally broke the mid-January Gaza ceasefire agreement with Hamas. The lengthy period of stages for implementation of the plan also means that there will be many points where it will be susceptible to a breakdown and a possible future outbreak of violence. Due to what transpired in March and Netanyahu's well-documented personal and political motivations to prolong the war, there is understandably a lack of trust that Israel will not seek to resume its military operations in Gaza and perpetuate its presence there – both of which are harmful to the prospect of peace moving forward.

Observers have also pointed out that Trump's Gaza peace plan lacks important details regarding governance, security, and a concrete pathway for Palestinian self-determination, while being vague on how it could be successfully implemented. The plan calls for a transitional Palestinian committee of technocrats to govern Gaza but offers no insight into who would appoint them or the manner in which they would be selected. Additionally, it seeks to create an "International Stabilization Force" (ISF) to help provide sustained security in Gaza, however, the makeup of this force, its mandate, and rules of engagement have not been defined. Furthermore, the Trump plan does not set out clear milestones or timeframes for key elements, such as Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and a detailed path for Palestinian self-determination. Without these measurable benchmarks, external occupation and presence could become entrenched. On top of all of this, the plan fails to address major impediments that are central to any hope of comprehensive and lasting peace like illegal Israeli settlement expansion and the troubling uptick in settler violence in the occupied West Bank. There are serious conflict of interest concerns as well, given that Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner played an instrumental role in drafting the Gaza peace plan.

While the Trump peace plan for Gaza would provide a desperately needed halt to Israel's calamitous military assault on the territory and pave the way for immediate humanitarian relief for besieged civilians on the ground, the rightful welcoming of this in the short term – should it be implemented – has still been coupled with valid concern regarding its potential viability in the long term. The plan leaves the pathway to Palestinian statehood and self-determination vague and contingent upon unlikely Israeli concessions, with no credible guarantees. In fact, in

the aftermath of the plan's unveiling, Netanyahu has boastfully made it clear regarding his unwavering opposition towards a Palestinian state and desire to continue undermining the peace process. Trump's proposal primarily focuses on halting the military assault on Gaza – at least temporarily – but it essentially allows for prolonged occupation and fails to provide a sustainable political and diplomatic resolution for the underlying fundamental causes of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Thus, most experts and analysts contend that the Trump plan is not workable in the long run.