



Proposals for Gaza Administration Post-War and the Palestinian Right

The discussions surrounding the governance framework for Gaza in the aftermath of the war have resurfaced, particularly as the Israeli occupation advances narratives promoting the reoccupation of Gaza and an extended military presence in the enclave. These developments are accompanied by Israel's continued intransigence in imposing barriers to any potential ceasefire solutions, effectively sustaining a state of stagnation. These barriers obstruct gradual steps toward ending the war or reaching a comprehensive agreement that addresses all outstanding issues.

Since Oct. 7, 2023, several regional and international initiatives have been proposed to end the Palestinian division between Hamas and Fatah. These include the Beijing and Russian understandings and the Cairo dialogues, which have provided Palestinians with opportunities to counter US pressures and Israeli schemes. Egypt's proposal, which presented a pragmatic framework for governing Gaza based on Palestinian consensus, represents a pivotal contribution in this regard.

Amid internal and external challenges, this report highlights the course of discussions regarding initiatives for Gaza's future post-ceasefire. It also examines the challenges facing negotiations on this matter, as well as potential alternatives proposed by various stakeholders.

First: The Palestinians and Proposals for Gaza's Governance

The prevailing sentiment has been that any solution must originate from within the Palestinian sphere rather than being imposed internationally. This vision aligns with Arab and Islamic positions, particularly regarding the classification of Palestinian factions as national liberation movements with the inherent right to determine the future of Gaza and the West Bank, reflecting the unified fabric of the Palestinian people.

Divergence Over the Community Support Committee

Following extensive efforts, Palestinian factions and forces, led by Hamas and Fatah, reached an agreement approximately one month after intensive

Egyptian-brokered negotiations in Cairo. The agreement established a «Community Support Committee» to oversee administrative and humanitarian affairs in Gaza. This committee was to consist of independent Palestinian figures and derive its legal authority from a presidential decree issued by the Palestinian Authority, allowing it to operate under Palestinian legal frameworks.

However, despite the consensus among Palestinian factions on forming the committee, Fatah, represented by the Palestinian Authority leadership, demonstrated a notable shift in its position. This manifested as an undeclared reservation about the committee's formation, which delayed the initial steps required for its establishment. Hamas criticized this hesitation in an official statement, urging the Palestinian Authority leadership to engage positively with efforts to form the committee.

Palestinian Authority leaders justified their reservations by expressing concerns about potential negative implications for Palestinian unity, both geographically and demographically. They feared the committee might reinforce a separation between Gaza and the West Bank. Instead of endorsing the committee, the Authority advocated for Hamas to transfer administrative control to a unified Palestinian government.

Conversely, various Palestinian factions, including Hamas and Islamic Jihad, called on the Authority to reconsider its rejection and actively support the agreed-upon framework. Furthermore, a wide range of national and independent societal figures issued a petition endorsing Egypt's efforts to form a committee for Gaza's administrative and humanitarian governance

as part of post-war arrangements. The petition also urged the Authority to adopt a positive approach toward the Egyptian proposal.

Statements from both political factions and civil society underscore the critical need for cohesive efforts to establish a temporary administrative body that transcends political divisions. Such a body is essential to prevent the occupation from monopolizing post-war arrangements. This collective goal has been a central focus for Palestinian factions since the genocide began on Oct. 7. The justifications cited by the Palestinian Authority, rooted in longstanding disputes, are seen as misaligned with the urgent needs of the current crisis. Gaza's population is in dire need of immediate administrative intervention to address the escalating humanitarian disaster at all levels.

Existing and Potential Challenges

The Palestinian Authority's refusal to issue a presidential decree to initiate the formation of the Community Support Committee represents a significant obstacle, despite prior agreements with Hamas and other Palestinian factions. This refusal has drawn widespread Palestinian criticism, as there appears to be no compelling justification for the Authority's reservations. The Authority is meant to directly oversee the committee and manage critical issues in Gaza, including humanitarian aid, reconstruction efforts, and the reopening of the Rafah crossing.

Additionally, the ongoing genocide and accompanying Israeli field operations that have decimated all aspects of life in Gaza present further significant

challenges to the committee's effectiveness post-war. The occupation aims to impose a geopolitical reality that will be difficult to address in the aftermath of the war, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis by expanding the destruction of infrastructure and broadening the geographic scope of military-controlled areas. These efforts are fortified with permanent security and military measures, creating a quasi-permanent state of occupation.

Alternative Palestinian Proposals

In response to the Palestinian Authority's refusal to issue a decree for the Community Support Committee, several influential figures within Fatah and the Authority have proposed that Hamas relinquish administrative control of Gaza to the Palestinian Authority, considered the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. This approach would negate the need for committees that might deepen political divisions and geographical separation between Gaza and the West Bank. This proposal, though unofficial, represents a broader suggestion from the Authority to Hamas and other Palestinian factions.

This proposal aligns with other suggestions made by regional and international actors during the summer of 2024. These suggestions envisioned a Palestinian Authority-led administration for Gaza, comprising Fatah affiliates from Gaza and the diaspora. This administration would exclude Hamas and operate independently of Israeli control. A security force of approximately 2,500 members would be established, trained by U.S. experts, and supported by moderate Arab states.

Moreover, certain factions within Fatah have proposed that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) assume responsibility for governing Gaza post-war. This proposal is seen as one that could garner regional support and international acceptance while enabling comprehensive political engagement on all levels.

Amid the current Palestinian stalemate, various scenarios for Gaza's post-war administration have been suggested. Among the most prominent is the formation of a ministerial committee, operating as a technocratic administration for Gaza, with Mohammed Dahlan potentially at its helm. Dahlan's extensive external relationships and significant involvement in Gaza's humanitarian sector are seen as potential assets. However, the feasibility of this and other scenarios remains contingent on the complexities of the internal Palestinian situation, which impose numerous considerations on all parties involved.

None of the involved parties, whether civil or factional, have shown substantial engagement with any of these proposals or scenarios. This is due to ongoing Egyptian efforts to resolve factional disagreements over the committee and the inherent difficulty of implementing such proposals without prior Palestinian agreements on numerous related issues. These challenges arise either from political considerations tied to specific individuals or because some of these proposals are narrowly focused on security aspects while neglecting administrative and humanitarian priorities, which are critical in the current phase.

Hamass Position

According to a statement issued by Hamas on Jan, 3, 2025, the movement's position is firmly rooted in its recognition of Gaza as an integral part of Palestinian geography. Hamas proposed the formation of a national government responsible for administering both Gaza and the West Bank post-war. The movement also expressed conditional acceptance of the "Temporary Governance" plan, under which the United States would train a security force. The Community Support Committee represented the latest iteration of international initiatives. Egypt viewed the administration of Gaza as one of the key issues in negotiations over the Strip's future, whether it remained under the Palestinian Authority's jurisdiction or moved toward separation.

As negotiations progressed, Hamas prioritized saving Gaza and halting the genocide, recognizing the collusion of Western powers and the failure of international mechanisms. This pragmatic approach led Hamas to adopt a more flexible stance toward cooperating with Fatah to end the war, negotiate a prisoner exchange agreement, and form the Community Support Committee to administer Gaza. Hamas insisted that any resolution must operate under the framework of the Palestinian political system and derive legitimacy from national consensus.

Hamas also demonstrated alignment with the Egyptian initiative during talks on forming a national unity government or technocratic administration. Its support for establishing the Community Support Committee symbolized an increasing willingness to foster Palestinian reconciliation.

Although delayed, Hamas's recent position reflects a significant shift toward addressing the immediate needs of Gaza's population, particularly in terms of security and the cessation of hostilities. Hamas emphasized the importance of a unified Palestinian framework to protect national legitimacy. The movement has indicated its readiness to implement agreed-upon solutions and has expressed openness to initiatives that promote Palestinian reunification, institutional cohesion, and respect for the political system's integrity.

Throughout this period, Hamas has consistently called for partial and phased agreements to end the war. However, inconsistent mediation efforts have hindered the realization of these demands, with Israeli-American influence undermining the agreements reached and their guarantees for implementation.

It is evident that leaving the question of Gaza's governance unresolved without a Palestinian consensus risks enabling the Israeli occupation to impose unilateral solutions. These would exclude Palestinian factions and official representation, furthering plans to create a geographic and demographic separation between Gaza and the West Bank. Such separation would obstruct any regional or international pressure on Israel to resume peace negotiations based on the two-state solution. Therefore, all Palestinian parties must prioritize the urgent need for an administrative and humanitarian governance mechanism. The formation of a temporary committee could represent an initial step toward a ceasefire and lay the groundwork for future discussions on forming a comprehensive national unity government.

Second: Israel's Stance on a Hamas Replacement in Gaza

Following the announcement of Egypt's proposal for the Community Support Committee in Gaza in Sept. 2024, Palestinian attention turned to Cairo to assess the potential outcomes of factional negotiations. The catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza underscored the need for collective efforts to mitigate the crisis. Many linked the establishment of the committee and factional negotiations to achieving a ceasefire, as any regional progress would inevitably align with US and Israeli positions. Israeli media emphasized the importance of establishing a civilian government in Gaza as an alternative to Hamas.

Netanyahu's Attempts at Family-Based Governance

Since March 2024, Israel's right-wing government has sought to engage prominent families in northern Gaza to establish local administrative structures. However, these efforts failed due to the resistance of Palestinian factions, which maintained their influence and security control, preventing the emergence of any local security elements opposed to their authority.

Despite employing destructive military capabilities that caused widespread humanitarian and security crises, Netanyahu's government achieved little beyond extensive destruction. Israel's efforts have also included fostering chaos through organized theft by groups looting aid supplies intended for Gaza and favoring a select group of merchants who exacerbated the ongoing humanitarian disaster.

Fear of a Return to Oct. 7

On Dec. 31, 2024, the Israeli website Ynet published a report highlighting Israeli security officials' concerns about the Netanyahu government's failure to find an alternative to Hamas in Gaza. More than a year after the war, Hamas remains in control of the Strip, albeit weakened and bearing significant losses. Officials stressed the importance of establishing an alternative before negotiating a prisoner exchange with Hamas.

Many Israeli voices continue to warn the Netanyahu government about the absence of a clear strategy for Gaza. Officials argue that a minor prisoner exchange deal could enable Hamas to regroup and reestablish its weak governance over Gaza. This sentiment is shared by senior Israeli military officials and non-coalition political factions.

Netanyahu, for his part, seeks to balance these perspectives with the views of his far-right religious allies. The current situation in Gaza serves the interests of right-wing factions, including Netanyahu himself. Consequently, Netanyahu downplays the severity of the current situation, believing that his government could return to a campaign of annihilation even after concluding a prisoner exchange agreement with Gaza's resistance. For the far-right, such an exchange is one of the war's objectives but does not signify an end to the conflict. This rationale explains recent Israeli and international reports on Hamas's partial recovery of military capabilities. Such reports, timed strategically, aim to justify the continuation of the war.

Israel's Position on a Replacement for Hamas in Gaza

Regarding the Community Support Committee and other occasional proposals to establish a local body to manage the humanitarian situation in Gaza, regional actors advocating such initiatives cannot diverge from or oppose Israeli positions. Israeli media in late December emphasized that the establishment of a committee or local government to replace Hamas in Gaza would be the optimal scenario for Israel. What resistance forces had managed to prevent in the early months of the war is now becoming a reality, as Palestinian factions increasingly align with these regional proposals. The occupation's earlier efforts to establish family-based governance as an alternative to Hamas have recently gained factional legitimacy, as factions find themselves compelled to accept options imposed by Israel and its international and regional backers.

Netanyahu and Deliberate Chaos

The Netanyahu government faces growing criticism over its failure to identify a viable alternative to Hamas's rule in Gaza. These criticisms, however, have not reached the severity of those voiced by former Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon, who accused the Israeli military of engaging in ethnic cleansing in Gaza. Ya'alon's statements prompted widespread condemnation, from the military to the ruling coalition and the opposition, including Yair Lapid, who deemed Ya'alon's remarks a serious misstep.

This apparent divide between the ruling coalition and the opposition should not

be mistaken for a substantive issue. Instead, it reflects a superficial disagreement, with each side attempting to gain political advantage domestically. Israel's persistent refusal to acknowledge ethnic cleansing—despite its systematic application—is not new. Zionist organizations have historically engaged in various forms of ethnic cleansing, and successive Israeli governments have consistently pursued the forced displacement of Palestinians.

Netanyahu's government, ignoring internal pressures from both the opposition and security institutions, continues to implement ethnic cleansing policies under the guise of disorganized or ad hoc actions in Gaza. The prospect of factions or the Palestinian Authority reaching an agreement on Gaza's governance does not necessarily signal an end to the war. Similarly, regional efforts to pressure Israel by announcing an independent committee or governance structure in Gaza, separate from Hamas's authority, do not deter the Israeli government from pursuing its objectives in Gaza. Particularly since the second phase of the Generals Plan has already begun, Netanyahu's government continues to buy time through indirect negotiations, aiming to fully achieve its goals in Gaza.

International Engagement with Gaza's Governance

Since the humanitarian pause of Nov. 30, 2023, mediation efforts by Qatar, Egypt, and the United States have intensified to broker a new ceasefire or halt the fighting. These efforts have largely focused on a prisoner exchange agreement between Israel and Hamas. On the Israeli side, pressure from the families of captured soldiers has amplified calls for a deal to secure their release. During this period, two main scenarios for Gaza's future governance

emerged: either a complete Israeli withdrawal from the Strip or the establishment of a local authority under international supervision.

Third: Regional and International Positions

In October 2023, Turkey introduced a set of guarantees to end the war. The proposal had two components: linking Israel's security to the establishment of a Palestinian state and appointing guarantors for each side—Islamic countries for the Palestinians and the United States or another party for Israel. These guarantors would oversee the implementation of obligations on both sides.

Egypt's Role

Egyptian policy has consistently supported the Palestinians' right to self-governance following a ceasefire. As such, Egypt has rejected Israeli and US proposals to deploy Arab or joint forces in Gaza, viewing such plans as undermining Palestinian sovereignty over Gaza's future.

Egypt has actively worked to overcome obstacles impeding the formation of the Community Support Committee by attempting to persuade the Palestinian Authority to proceed with the necessary steps. Egypt's assurances include placing the committee under the Authority's supervision to allay fears that Hamas might exploit the committee to sustain its rule in Gaza. Egypt has also advocated deferring divisive issues, such as political factionalism, to future discussions within the framework of forming a national unity government.

The general framework proposed for Gaza's post-war governance involves the return of the Palestinian Authority, albeit with adjustments, or the establishment of a technocratic government. Negotiations regarding the Rafah crossing have also been part of these discussions, seeking a middle ground under international supervision that includes Turkish involvement to prevent the geographical separation of Gaza from the West Bank.

The US Proposal

In July 2024, the United States proposed linking the Palestinian Authority's return to Gaza with diplomatic normalization between Israel and Saudi Arabia, as part of efforts to pave the way for a two-state solution. The international aspect of this proposal involved placing Gaza under the control of an international force, supervised by NATO, for five years. During this period, a transitional authority would be established to prepare the infrastructure for a future Palestinian state.

The U.S. proposal attempts to align with the principles of the Arab Peace Initiative by advocating a state based on the 1967 borders. However, it neglects the reciprocal obligations between Palestinians and Israel, appearing more focused on obstructing Arab and Islamic efforts to formulate a long-term peace framework. A notable aspect of U.S. policy has been the deliberate stalling of progress through disputes with the Israeli government over the details of American proposals.

According to the U.S. initiative, priority was given to international contributions toward reconstruction and ensuring the unhindered flow of aid. However,

subsequent provisions in the plan undermined Palestinian sovereignty by emphasizing disarmament and rejecting Hamas's continued governance, branding it a terrorist organization. In exchange for Israel's complete withdrawal from Gaza and its reunification with the West Bank under Palestinian Authority leadership, Hamas would be required to disarm.

Despite these proposals, U.S. mediation efforts have largely been characterized by delays stemming from disputes with the Israeli government over proposal specifics, the protection of Netanyahu's administration from international condemnation, and securing a prisoner exchange deal. These disputes have hindered progress on both the prisoner exchange and the ceasefire.

The future of the Gaza Strip hinges on the balance of relationships between three key components. The first is the continued recognition of Hamas as a principal actor in the Palestinian equation. The second involves achieving regional consensus and a unified stance on initiatives such as the «Implementation of the Two-State Solution,» led by Saudi Arabia, alongside advancing national reconciliation and balancing international roles. The third pertains to the ability of the Israeli occupation and the United States to deflect and maneuver past mounting regional and international pressures.