



# Three Perspectives on Egypt's Role and Implications of War on Gaza

This report examines the dimensions of Egypt's role in the war on Gaza from three analytical perspectives. The first perspective explores Egypt's position, including Cairo's policies regarding the war and its diplomatic stance amid regional and international pressures. The second focuses on Palestinian perceptions of Egypt's role during the war and its potential impact on Gaza's future and Palestinian reconciliation. The third addresses Israel's view of Egypt's role and its implications for the peace treaty and security dynamics in the region.

## Egypt's Policy, the War, and Displacement

Since the introduction of a ceasefire initiative in December 2023, Egypt's policy toward the war in Gaza has followed two main tracks: working toward de-escalation and protecting Egypt's national interests. In this context, Egypt intensified consultations between Palestinian factions while engaging in regional and

international diplomatic channels related to the conflict.

As the war continued, Egypt took measures to ensure security stability along its border with Gaza, including intensified diplomatic efforts and engagement with various stakeholders. This period also saw a media discourse that reflected the link between developments in Gaza and Egypt's regional security interests, particularly concerning the stability of the West Bank and the implications of the conflict on Egyptian national security.

In dealing with Palestinian factions, Cairo sought to keep all parties engaged in negotiations, ensuring that no Palestinian group was excluded from discussions. This approach was reflected in Egypt's diplomatic stance within international organizations, where it positioned itself as an active mediator in the conflict.

Egypt leveraged its relationships with various parties, including Israel, to facilitate dialogue and negotiations. It also played a role in monitoring security arrangements and ensuring the implementation of agreements while maintaining a neutral mediation stance. However, Egypt did not take official steps to join South Africa's case against Israel at the International Court of Justice, though it left the door open for such an action in alignment with its broader conflict management strategy.

Overall, Egypt pursued a diplomatic strategy focused on regional engagement, coordinating Arab and Islamic efforts regarding the war's implications. This was evident in Egypt's hosting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) summit in December 2023 in Cairo, where the final statement underscored the importance of ending the war and upholding Palestinian rights per international references.

## **Egypt's Continued Role in the Regional Landscape**

On a regional level, Egypt remained actively engaged with political developments in the Middle East. Despite growing crises in Syria, Egypt continued to monitor developments and maintain engagement despite potential security

challenges. This was evident in Egypt's participation in the Aqaba and Riyadh summits on Syria, as well as diplomatic exchanges between the Egyptian and Syrian foreign ministers. Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi also extended congratulations to Syria's newly appointed transitional government, signaling Egypt's interest in remaining engaged in regional politics.

In the Levant, Egypt adopted a strategy aimed at stabilizing Lebanon and engaging with Syria's transitional government within a broader vision of promoting regional stability. Egypt also strengthened its coordination with Jordan to maintain a balanced position on the Palestinian issue, intensifying diplomatic efforts in recent months to support a more integrated approach to regional diplomacy.

Egypt played a key role in regional diplomatic efforts alongside Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Qatar, and the UAE, seeking to bolster political support for the Palestinian cause. During this period, Egypt and Saudi Arabia aligned their positions, rejecting any proposals related to the forced displacement of Gaza's residents, a stance reflected in official statements that reaffirmed commitment to the two-state solution and the ceasefire agreement.

Regarding relations with Turkey, Egyptian-Turkish coordination intensified as both countries worked to end Palestinian divisions. Bilateral meetings between the Egyptian and Turkish foreign ministers focused on supporting Palestinian resilience and unifying Palestinian factions under a single political framework, preventing internal divisions from being exploited in future arrangements. Cairo and Ankara also shared a common interest in accelerating Gaza's reconstruction efforts to alleviate humanitarian burdens and prevent potential displacement scenarios.

## **Egypt's Response to International Pressures**

On the international level, Egypt faced increasing pressure from the United States and Europe regarding Gaza's future. Proposals suggesting the resettlement of Gazans outside the Strip presented a major challenge for Egyptian policy, particularly amid discussions about alternative solutions after the U.S. elections.

In response, Egypt pursued a dual strategy:

First, it delivered clear political messages on its border and sovereignty stance, including symbolic events near border areas to reaffirm its rejection of any arrangements that contradicted its national interests.

Second, it implemented security measures in North Sinai to enhance border stability and security.

Egypt engaged in diplomatic efforts to ensure compliance with the ceasefire agreement, including discussions on the Netzarim Corridor's future as part of broader security arrangements. These efforts reinforced Egypt's role as a principal mediator, ensuring a balanced power dynamic among all parties. Egypt's clear stance also influenced Washington to reconsider its proposals for Gaza, shifting its focus toward diplomatic solutions rather than unilateral approaches.

## **Palestinian Perceptions of Egypt's Role**

During the war, Egypt played a pivotal role in diplomatic efforts related to the Gaza conflict, particularly in addressing concerns over forced displacement.

Egyptian mediation ensured the inclusion of key provisions in the ceasefire agreement, such as arrangements for the Rafah border crossing and the Philadelphi Corridor. Egypt also maintained its support for the two-state solution, as emphasized in official statements.

## **Efforts to End Palestinian Division**

Palestinian factions acknowledged Egypt's crucial role in fostering internal reconciliation. Various groups responded positively to Egyptian initiatives aimed at ending Palestinian division and facilitating ceasefire negotiations. Cairo's mediation also led to a preliminary agreement between factions regarding the administration of Gaza through a "Community Support Committee" proposal. However, challenges remain, including the Palestinian Authority's commitment to proposed governance structures, prompting Egypt to resume inter-factional dialogue.

## **Israel's View on Egypt's Role**

Egypt's firm stance on resisting displacement plans significantly influenced Israeli discourse on Gaza's future. In the early weeks of the war, Israeli political rhetoric advocated the forced relocation of Gazans to Egypt, a position promoted by far-right Israeli factions. However, this narrative soon shifted as military and strategic priorities took precedence, with Israel lacking a clear long-term vision for Gaza.

With various international proposals circulating regarding the situation in Gaza, including ideas related to new population arrangements, the need for rapid Palestinian internal consensus has become increasingly urgent. Such an agreement would help stabilize conditions within Gaza and prevent internal divisions from being exploited in future political scenarios. However, disagreements among Palestinian factions remain a significant challenge to progress in this regard, prompting Egypt to intensify its efforts to bridge differences and facilitate the formation of a national unity government that would support internal stability and strengthen the Palestinian political landscape.

## The Palestinian Authority and Egypt's Role

Since the beginning of the war on Gaza, the Palestinian Authority has worked closely with Egyptian officials to reach an agreement on the administration of the Rafah border crossing, an issue that gained added importance after Israeli forces seized control of the crossing in May 2024. Meetings were held between the head of the Palestinian Crossing Authority, Nazmi Muhanna, the Director-General of the Ministry of Civil Affairs, Ayman Qandil, and Egyptian security officials to discuss operational mechanisms for the crossing and ensure its continued functioning.

Egyptian mediation efforts regarding the Rafah border crossing were conducted separately from ceasefire negotiations, with agreements on the crossing's operation being reached before an initial truce was agreed upon. Additionally, in the weeks leading up to the ceasefire agreement, ongoing discussions were

held between representatives of the Palestinian Authority, Egyptian intelligence officials, and Israeli officials to finalize operational arrangements for the crossing.

As part of broader regional efforts to resolve the crisis, the Palestinian Authority has sought to enhance its role in governing Gaza, aligning itself with the positions of several Arab states that advocate for a political solution ensuring the prevention of any forced displacement of Gaza's residents. These efforts are in line with broader initiatives to stabilize the ceasefire, end internal Palestinian divisions, and form a national unity government that would support the two-state solution, a position endorsed by both Egypt and Jordan on multiple occasions.

## Public Perceptions

The Palestinian public in Gaza has shown mixed reactions to Egypt's role in implementing the ceasefire agreement. There have been positive responses to Egypt's supervision of vehicle movement through the Salah al-Din corridor, as well as general approval of the conduct of Egyptian security forces deployed in the area. These factors have helped build trust in Egyptian mediation efforts, particularly given Cairo's clear rejection of proposals to relocate Gaza's residents outside their homeland.

In response to these developments, several Palestinian tribal groups have issued statements commending Egypt's firm stance against forced displacement. In some areas of Gaza, banners have been displayed in support of Egypt's position. Additionally, Egypt's official rejection of international proposals concerning Gaza's future has been well received across various Palestinian circles, including both official authorities and political factions, given the broader challenges facing Palestinians at multiple levels.

Overall, Egypt's mediation efforts form a critical component of regional initiatives aimed at promoting stability and mitigating the consequences of the war. While the threats facing Palestinians in Gaza persist, achieving internal unity among Palestinian factions remains a fundamental requirement for any future solutions. This objective remains central to Egypt's ongoing diplomatic efforts.

## Israel's View of Egypt's Role

Egypt's role has had a significant impact on Israeli discussions about Gaza's future, particularly regarding proposals to relocate the Strip's residents outside its borders. In the early weeks of the war, Israeli political and media discourse saw a surge in calls to transfer Gaza's population to Egyptian territory, a narrative pushed by certain far-right factions. However, this rhetoric gradually diminished in favor of immediate military and operational priorities, given Israel's lack of a unified long-term strategy for Gaza.

In this context, Egypt maintained a firm stance against any arrangements that would compromise its sovereignty or alter realities along its borders. This position played a key role in pushing back against some Israeli proposals related to the relocation of Gaza's population. Furthermore, the ceasefire agreement introduced a new dimension to Israeli discussions, with opinions split between those advocating for long-term solutions that guarantee Israel's security and those preferring continued pressure on Gaza without making definitive decisions about its inhabitants' future.

### The Significance of the Displacement Proposal for Israelis

Statements made by U.S. President Donald Trump, suggesting the relocation of Gaza's residents outside the Strip, sparked considerable interest in Israeli political circles. Some viewed these remarks as an opportunity to ease internal political pressures on the ruling coalition, while certain settler groups saw them

as paving the way for potential future settlement expansion in Gaza. Despite Egypt's and Jordan's clear rejection of such proposals, debates continued within Israel over alternative resettlement plans, including suggestions to relocate Palestinians to areas within Saudi Arabia or certain African countries, as reported in Israeli media and political discourse.

However, Israeli public opinion has been divided on these proposals. Polls indicate that approximately 72% of Israelis supported the idea, but 46% believed it was not feasible, while 35% thought displacement could become a reality. This divide reflects Israel's uncertainty over whether such policies could be implemented, especially given that the displacement proposal contradicts the ceasefire agreement's goal of restoring calm in Gaza and the broader region.

## The Israeli Divide Over Egypt's Role

Amid these discussions, Israeli officials have expressed varying positions on Egypt's role in Gaza. While Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and some members of his coalition have continued to discuss different scenarios for handling Gaza, the issue of border crossings has been a focal point. Netanyahu has criticized Egypt, accusing it of imposing restrictions on the movement of Gaza's residents through the Rafah crossing. On the other hand, Israeli Defense Minister Yisrael Katz has put forward an alternative plan aimed at facilitating the voluntary departure of Palestinians from Gaza.

Despite Egypt's unwavering opposition to any arrangements that involve the forced displacement of Gaza's population, the Israeli government has not issued an official condemnation of Egypt's stance. This contrasts with statements made during the early weeks of the war when some far-right leaders in Israel blamed Egypt for enabling the Palestinian factions' military capabilities, citing underground tunnel networks between Gaza and Sinai. It appears that Israel has left the matter of engaging with Egypt and Jordan to the United



States, which has been the most active party in promoting these ideas, given its leverage in exerting political and diplomatic pressure on regional actors.

## Indirect Media Pressure

Alongside Egypt's rejection of displacement proposals, the Israeli newspaper The Jerusalem Post published a report discussing Egypt's relationship with Iran, which some observers interpreted as an attempt to pressure Egypt into accepting Gaza's population within Sinai. This report drew comparisons to previous Israeli media tactics when Saudi Arabia refused to normalize relations with Israel without a Palestinian state. At the time, Israel's Channel 14, which is closely aligned with Netanyahu, framed Saudi-Israeli relations in a way that was seen as politically pressuring Riyadh. This was followed by Netanyahu's proposal to establish a Palestinian state within Saudi territories, a suggestion that some viewed as a shift in Israel's political rhetoric toward the kingdom.

Despite increased Israeli media coverage of Egypt's position, official Israeli rhetoric has not escalated to the same level as seen in its interactions with Saudi Arabia. So far, Egypt's rejection of displacement proposals has remained within the scope of media discussions and political analyses in Israel, without any direct official Israeli statements adopting an escalatory stance against Cairo.

## Israeli Media Coverage of Egypt

Israeli analyst Eli Dekel examined the nature of Egyptian-Israeli relations since the signing of the Camp David Accords in 1978, highlighting various issues related to Cairo's policies toward Israel. He noted that while Egypt does not officially prohibit its citizens from visiting Israel, it imposes bureaucratic procedures that discourage travel. He also discussed cultural and religious aspects in Egypt, such as the high number of mosques within Egyptian military camps, as well as Al-Azhar's stance, which he claimed did not issue a clear condemnation of the October 7 attacks, interpreting this as an official Egyptian policy that does not exert pressure on Palestinian factions.

Additionally, Dekel addressed security cooperation between Egypt and Israel, noting that prior to Hamas attack, Israeli intelligence assessments suggested that Hamas was not in a position to launch a large-scale attack. This raised questions within Israeli circles about the accuracy of intelligence evaluations.

## Future of Israel's Position on Egypt

Despite these media reports, the controversy has not escalated to the point of direct official criticism of Egypt's rejection of displacement proposals. This is due to the lack of a clear Israeli strategy on how to proceed with the issue, as well as the widespread regional and international opposition to such plans, including opposition from within the United States itself.

Given this context, the Israeli government appears to favor maintaining open communication channels with Egypt, particularly in light of Egypt's crucial role as a primary mediator in ceasefire negotiations with Gaza. The long-standing stability of Egyptian-Israeli relations makes significant political escalation unlikely at this time. Instead, Israel seems to be leaving the matter largely to U.S. diplomatic management, especially in light of reports suggesting an upcoming meeting between former U.S. President Donald Trump, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, and Jordan's King Abdullah, which could shed light on the future of Gaza-related proposals and the extent of U.S.-regional alignment on the issue.

## Egypt's Response and Future Directions

Overall, Egypt's strategy during the crisis has reflected a flexible approach in managing political and media pressures, while avoiding direct confrontations with international or regional actors. This was evident in official statements from the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Presidency, which reaffirmed Egypt's rejection of any arrangements involving the resettlement of Gaza's residents outside their territory while simultaneously emphasizing the priority of maintaining regional stability and preserving bilateral relations with various parties.

Furthermore, the recent call between U.S. President Donald Trump and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi did not explicitly address the implementation of the ceasefire agreement or resettlement proposals, suggesting that these issues may still be under discussion through other diplomatic channels.

Despite this, developments in the coming phase could provide greater clarity on how the relevant parties will approach these issues, particularly as efforts continue to seek more sustainable political solutions to the Gaza conflict.