The future of Gaza: Israel must implement Trump’s plan gradually, safely

written by Prof. Kobi Michael | 01.12.2025

The ceasefire that came into effect on the basis of US President Donald Trump’s 20-point plan, leading to the release of all living hostages and 26 of the 28 deceased hostages, constitutes a significant achievement for Israel, all the more so given that it was secured while the country continued to hold 53% of the Gaza Strip at this stage.

The plan, subsequently endorsed in UN Security Council Resolution 2803, mandates the disarmament of Hamas, the demilitarization of the enclave, the establishment of a technocratic government backed by an international stabilization force under the guidance of a Board of Peace, and the exclusion of Hamas from governance and from the reconstruction process.

On paper, full implementation of the plan would deliver all the objectives of the war. In practice, however, the likelihood of implementing the plan and the UN resolution with Hamas’s cooperation is nearly nonexistent. Consequently, Israel faces three possible scenarios.

Three possible scenarios for Gaza’s future

The first scenario envisions implementation of the Trump plan only after the IDF – in the absence of any other actor that has both the will and the capability – resumes fighting against Hamas, effectively freezing Phase B of the plan. The IDF would become the sole actor responsible for dismantling Hamas’s military capabilities, enforcing demilitarization, and creating the conditions for the plan’s eventual execution, with maximum operational freedom.

The second scenario would see gradual implementation, beginning with reconstruction efforts and the establishment of a stabilization mechanism east of the Yellow Line, alongside the resumption of IDF operations against Hamas in the western Gaza Strip to dismantle it and demilitarize the area until conditions are

set for expanding the mechanism's responsibility to the entire enclave.

The third scenario involves only partial and inadequate implementation. Under this scenario, Israel would face restraints and operational limits in its campaign against Hamas, resulting in a de facto division between eastern Gaza and western Gaza, with Hamas remaining in control west of the Yellow Line. This would effectively cement a new border and stall progress toward realizing the plan.

Each scenario presents Israel with challenges and tensions vis-à-vis core national interests. Since full implementation of the 20-point plan would meet all war objectives as defined by the Israeli government, the preferred scenario from Israel's perspective is the second, provided it can be reached quickly and backed by American support for renewed military action.

However, if the United States is slow to conclude that Hamas cannot be disarmed or Gaza demilitarized through cooperation with Hamas or via Turkish and Qatari pressure and that only renewed IDF action can achieve these goals, then the first scenario becomes more favorable to Israel. This would entail an intensive military campaign aimed at dismantling Hamas and fully demilitarizing the enclave, potentially leading to a significant crisis with Washington.

In our assessment, the scenario that would entrench a divided Gaza – east under IDF control and west under Hamas – is both the most likely and the most problematic, as it would almost certainly lead to another round of fighting. Only this time, Hamas would enter that conflict from a strengthened position, having rebuilt its military and governing capabilities in the territory under its control and having eroded some of the gains Israel accumulated over two years of fighting.

Therefore, at this juncture, and in order to create the conditions that would increase the likelihood of the preferred second scenario, it is in Israel's interest to allow the United States the space and time to act according to its own approach, until Washington reaches the inevitable conclusion that Hamas cannot be disarmed or Gaza demilitarized through persuasion alone.

Until then, Israel should avoid becoming an obstacle and instead deepen coordination and mutual understandings with the US, including limiting the roles and influence of Turkey and Qatar, preventing any Turkish military presence in Gaza, preserving American backing for disproportionate responses to Hamas violations of the agreement, and building legitimacy for renewed military action

to complete the task, meet the war’s objectives, and enable fuller implementation of the Trump Plan.

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