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Trump Launches “Board of Peace”: Outcomes and Challenges

Unit for Political Studies

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Unit for Political Studies

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Table of Contents

Outcomes and Challenges	1
1. Reconstruction	1
2. The International Stabilization Force (ISF)	3
Challenges Facing the Board	3
1. Centralized Personal Control by Trump	3
2. Competing with the UN and Undermining its Global Role	4
3. The Absence of Palestinian Representation	5
Conclusion	5



On 19 February, the first meeting of US President Donald Trump's "Board of Peace" was held in Washington to discuss plans for the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip more than two years into Israel's onslaught against the territory. The meeting came even as Israeli continued its repeated violations of a ceasefire agreement which came into effect on 10 October last year. Representatives from more than 40 countries took part in the meeting; 27 officially joined the Board, while 21 countries plus the European Union chose to attend as observers.¹

By contrast, US allies such as Britain, France, Norway, and Sweden declined to join, citing concerns about the Board's charter, which does not explicitly mention Gaza, but which grants the body broad powers to intervene in "hotspots" around the world, potentially undermining the role of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security. One notable attendee at the meeting was Gideon Sa'ar, Foreign Minister of the occupying power – which was is a member of the Board of Peace despite committing genocide and pulverizing the Gaza Strip. There was no Palestinian representation.

Outcomes and Challenges

The meeting yielded two main outcomes. First, member states pledged approximately \$7 billion for the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip, in addition to Washington's promise of \$10 billion. Second, the body committed to establishing an "International Stabilization Force" tasked with assuming security responsibilities in the Palestinian territory.

1. Reconstruction

During the meeting, Trump unveiled a plan for the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip, as well as announcing pledges of \$7 billion by nine member states: Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, the United Arab Emirates, Morocco, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan, and Kuwait. However, specific amounts were only unveiled by four states: Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the UAE (\$1 billion each).² Trump also announced that the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) had agreed to raise an additional \$2 billion to support Gaza. He noted that Japan would host fundraising events for the Board, with South Korea, the Philippines, Singapore, China, and Russia expected to participate.³ World Bank President Ajay Banga said that the Bank had begun establishing a fund for the reconstruction and development of Gaza.⁴

A video presentation aired during the meeting outlined plans for the reconstruction of Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip, along with the creation of a "gateway" linking Gaza to Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and

¹ "Countries that Attended Trump's First Board of Peace Meeting in Washington," *Associated Press*, 19/2/2026, accessed on 26/2/2026, at: <https://acr.ps/1L9F3ak>.

² "\$7 billion in aid to Gaza at first meeting of 'Board of Peace'," *Al-Araby Al-Jadeed*, 19/2/2026, accessed 26/2/2026 (in Arabic), at: <https://acr.ps/1L9F2XF>.

³ Tiago Ventura, "Five Key Takeaways From Trump's First Gaza Board of Peace Meeting," *Time*, 19/2/2026, accessed on 26/2/2026, at: <https://acr.ps/1L9F2vD>.

⁴ "\$7 billion in aid to Gaza."



the Gulf states. The presentation predicted that by the plan's 10th year, "Gaza will be self-governed, integrated into the region with thriving industries and housing for all."⁵ This vision is based on the plan unveiled by Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law and a member of the Executive Board, at the Davos Forum. Kushner envisions a "new Gaza" featuring skyscrapers, tourist beaches, data centres, and advanced industries – an ambitious vision of real estate development that not only ignores the reality of occupation, apartheid, and the national rights of the Palestinian people, but also stands in stark contrast to the widespread devastation the Gaza Strip has endured over the course of two years of non-stop Israeli bombardment.⁶

The UN estimates that the Gaza Strip contains more than 60 million tons of rubble, enough to fill some 3,000 container ships, and that just removing it could take more than seven years, followed by additional time for demining – estimates rejected by the White House.⁷ Even if donor countries fulfil their pledges, the sums announced represent only a fraction of the estimated \$70 billion needed to rebuild the Strip, according to the UN, the EU, and the World Bank. The UN's Development Programme (UNDP) estimates that more than 80% of the territory's buildings, including schools, hospitals, and homes, have been destroyed, and that at least \$20 billion will be needed during the first three years of reconstruction alone.⁸

Doubts are growing over the feasibility of reconstruction at all, given that Israel has made it conditional on the complete disarmament of Hamas and the dismantling of its tunnel network and arms manufacturing facilities.⁹ During the meeting, Trump said that Hamas had promised to disarm, and asserted that "it looks like they're going to be doing that," a statement that links political progress to military commitment. However, he ruled out direct US military intervention, saying he hoped using force to disarm the group would not be necessary.¹⁰ Hamas, for its part, rejects US and Israeli demands, asserting that the issue of weapons is an internal Palestinian matter, and that it is prepared to hand them over to a Palestinian body with national legitimacy. There are also doubts over Israel's stance on the Kushner plan, which includes the construction of a new port and airport after a blockade of nearly two decades. Israel is likely to reject any project involving such a large number of high-rise buildings, arguing that they would provide a direct view of its military bases near the edge of the Gaza Strip.¹¹

5 Chantal Da Silva et al., "Trump Vows \$10 Billion from U.S. for his Board of Peace as he Leans into Global Role," *NBC News*, 19/2/2026, accessed on 26/2/2026, at: <https://acr.ps/1L9F2ba>.

6 Nick Duffy & Matt Bradley, "Jared Kushner's vision for Gaza as a gleaming port city clashes with reality," *NBC News*, 24/1/2026, accessed on 26/2/2026, at: <https://acr.ps/1L9F2OU>.

7 Ibid.

8 Chantal Da Silva, "What Trump's First Board of Peace Summit Signals about Gaza's Future," *NBC News*, 20/2/2026, accessed on 26/2/2026, at: <https://acr.ps/1L9F2u7>.

9 Trevor Hunnicutt, Simon Lewis & Steve Holland, "Board of Peace Debut, Trump Announces Global Commitments for Gaza Reconstruction," *Reuters*, 19/2/2026, accessed on 26/2/2026, at: <https://acr.ps/1L9F2xW>.

10 Ibid.

11 Duffy & Bradley.



2. The International Stabilization Force (ISF)

During the meeting, several countries – notably Muslim-majority nations like Indonesia, Morocco, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, and Albania – pledged to contribute thousands of troops to the ISF, tasked with ensuring security in the Gaza Strip. US Major General Jasper Jeffers, the force’s commander, said Indonesia had been asked to fill the position of deputy commander, which it had accepted; Jakarta said it was prepared to send up to 8,000 troops.¹² Other countries have not specified the numbers of troops they will deploy, although Morocco has announced its intention to send high-ranking military officers, along with police officers and trainers. Egypt and Jordan have also pledged to help train Palestinian police in the Gaza Strip,¹³ while a team of American military experts is working to prepare the infrastructure needed for their operations. According to the deployment plans, the ISF will operate in five districts, starting with Rafah, then gradually expand across the Strip, with the long-term goal of deploying 12,000 police officers and 20,000 soldiers.¹⁴ However, no precise details have been released on the nature of the force’s mission and the areas where it will operate, including the question of whether it will be deployed on the border with Israel or be tasked with disarming the Palestinian resistance directly – an Israeli demand rejected by Palestinian armed factions.

Challenges Facing the Board

From the perspective of legitimacy and justice, the Board of Peace has three fundamental characteristics: it ignores the Israeli occupation and the Palestinian cause as a national issue; it operates according to Israeli visions and conditions; and it ignores the genocide by incorporating its perpetrator as a member. Even according to the logic of the existing international order based on the balance of power, and despite the optimistic and confident tone Trump is keen to project regarding his project, the Board of Peace raises a number of questions and concerns – including from countries traditionally considered allies of the US. Misgivings over the Board’s structure and nature stem from three main issues:

1. Centralized Personal Control by Trump

The Board of Peace was established by UN Security Council Resolution 2803 of November 2015, which welcomed "the establishment of the Board of Peace (BoP) as a transitional administration with international legal personality that will set the framework, and coordinate funding for, the redevelopment of Gaza pursuant to the Comprehensive Plan, and in a manner consistent

¹² Lyndal Rowlands, "Indonesia, Morocco, Kosovo among 5 Countries to Send Troops under Gaza Plan," *Al Jazeera*, 20/2/2026, accessed on 26/2/2026, at: <https://acr.ps/1L9F2QO>.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ventura.

with relevant international legal principles, until such time as the Palestinian Authority (PA) has satisfactorily completed its reform program."¹⁵

Yet despite this, the Board's founding charter granted Trump exceptionally far-reaching powers. The US president, along with representatives of several other countries, signed the charter in January 2016 on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos. It granted him extensive personal powers including a veto, a presidency with no term limits, and the ability to control the body's composition by inviting or expelling members. Furthermore, the charter gave Trump sole authority to interpret, implement, and ratify its provisions. It granted him the power to appoint members of the Executive Council, establish, modify, or dissolve its affiliated entities, and even to disband the Board of Peace entirely. The whole project is therefore entirely dependent on him and subject to his whims, raising questions about its future after his presidential term ends in early 2029.¹⁶

2. Competing with the UN and Undermining its Global Role

Security Council Resolution 2803 defines the scope of the Board of Peace's work in the Gaza Strip, under its own supervision. However, the Board's own charter does not explicitly mention Gaza. Instead, it implicitly presents itself as an alternative to the UN internationally, citing "the need for a more nimble and effective international peace-building body... [and] the courage to depart from approaches and institutions that have too often failed."¹⁷

In his inaugural address launching the Board, Trump outlined his vision for the body's role within the world body, stating that "we're going to strengthen up the United Nations," and that "the Board of Peace is going to almost be looking over the United Nations and making sure it runs properly." He added that the UN has "really great potential," but had not lived up to it.¹⁸

This ignores the fact that the US itself, along with the other four permanent members, bears major responsibility for hindering the UN's work, whether by vetoing resolutions related to enforcing international law to resolve conflicts, or through withholding financial dues. This has placed the UN in a severe crisis, leading Secretary-General António Guterres to warn that the body faces "imminent financial collapse" unless funding rules are reformed and member states pay their outstanding dues. Washington alone owes more than \$2 billion, including \$767 million due for 2026.¹⁹

These concerns have led a number of countries, including US allies such as Britain, France, Germany, Norway, Belgium, Switzerland, the EU, Australia, Japan, and South Korea, to refrain from joining

¹⁵ United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 2803 (2025) Adopted by the Security Council at its 10046th meeting, on 17 November 2025* (New York: 17/11/2025), accessed on 26/2/2026, at: <https://acr.ps/1L9F3ag>.

¹⁶ Jacob Magid, "Full text: Charter of Trump's Board of Peace," *The Times of Israel*, 18/1/2026, accessed on 26/2/2026, at: <https://acr.ps/1L9F2ie>.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ "Speech: Donald Trump Addresses a Board of Peace Meeting in Washington - February 19, 2026," *Roll Call*, 19/2/2026, accessed 27/2/2026, at: <https://acr.ps/1L9F31F>.

¹⁹ Ventura.

the Board of Peace, fearing it could pose as an alternative to the UN. This has drawn criticism from Trump, who accused them of dodging the issue.²⁰ China and India also declined to join, while Russia is approaching the issue pragmatically, aiming to leverage it in negotiations with Washington on the Ukraine crisis and sanctions.

3. The Absence of Palestinian Representation

One of the most significant problems associated with the Board of Peace is the absence of Palestinian representation, in contrast to the presence of Israel. Trump invited Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to join the body, which Netanyahu accepted, signing its founding charter on behalf of Israel on 11 February during a visit to Washington. The lack of Palestinian representation has led several countries to refrain from joining, and international human rights experts have condemned the body as a colonial project.²¹

The Board of Peace consists of these key structures:

1. The main Board of Peace, comprising the heads of state of member countries; approximately 60 leaders were invited to join.
2. The Executive Board, concerned with diplomacy and investment, which has seven members.
3. The Gaza Executive Board, which oversees the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG), tasked with managing the day-to-day affairs of the Strip, and is composed of Palestinian technocrats. This is the only form of Palestinian representation within the body, occupying the lowest institutional rung and excluded from decision-making over the future of the Strip.

Conclusion

There are serious doubts over how the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip can proceed under the leadership of the Board of Peace, which is highly subject to Trump's inclinations, ambitions, and political choices, in addition to the influence of his advisors, close to Israel. Furthermore, the body itself is surrounded by uncertainty. It is difficult to imagine that a future US administration, especially a Democratic one, would keep in place an entity so heavily centred around Trump personally. The US president even used the Board's inaugural session to reiterate his disappointment at not being awarded the 2025 Nobel Peace Prize, reflecting a recurring tendency in his political behaviour to personalize public initiatives and claim credit for them. This is also evident in the renaming of the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) as the Donald J. Trump Institute of Peace, whose headquarters in Washington hosted the body's inaugural meeting. The charter of the Board of Peace also reveals that its focus is not limited to Gaza, which appears as an afterthought to a broader project embodying Trump's vision of the international order as he envisions and seeks to reshape it.²²

²⁰ Shawn McCreesh, "With a Golden Gavel and a Threat to Iran, Trump Launches His Board of Peace," *The New York Times*, 19/2/2026, accessed on 26/2/2026, at: <https://acr.ps/1L9F21a>.

²¹ Da Silva et al.

²² McCreesh.



This vision is based on the logic of power, with limited regard for international law – whether through military operations without UN authorization, as in the attacks on Iran, Nigeria, and Venezuela, or through the exertion of political and economic pressure and blackmail, including against US allies, as seen in tariff policies, the Greenland debacle, and trade disputes with Canada. There is also a stark paradox in that fact that Trump’s call for peace has coincided with direct threats of a large-scale military operation against Iran unless it complies with demands related to its nuclear programme. Furthermore, the positions of member states indicate that some joined the council to avoid antagonizing Trump, or to appease him, while others, including some key US allies, abstained – not in defence of the rights of the Palestinian people, but rather out of an awareness that their participation could contribute to entrenching a vision of the international order based on the logic of power and political coercion.