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European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

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12.02.2025

## ***Trump vows Palestinians will be barred from returning to Gaza after ethnic cleansing***



Displaced Palestinians make their way from central Gaza to their homes in the northern Gaza Strip, Monday, Feb. 10, 2025. [AP Photo/Jehad Alshrafi]

US President Donald Trump said in an interview over the weekend that the Palestinian people he is seeking to ethnically cleanse from Gaza would not be allowed to return to their homes. “I’m talking about building a permanent place for them,” Trump said.

Trump’s statement contradicted claims last week by White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt that the relocation of the Palestinians from Gaza proposed by Trump would be temporary. Secretary of State Marco Rubio likewise claimed last week that the displacement of the Palestinians would be an “interim” measure, and the population would be allowed to “move back in.”

In his weekend interview, Trump, speaking as a king, referred to Gaza as his personal property. “I would own this. Think of it as a real estate development for the future. It would be a beautiful piece of land,” Trump said.

He continued, “There won’t be anybody there. ... Hamas won’t be there. ... We’ll be building through other of the very rich countries in the Middle East.”

Trump raised the prospect of relocating the Palestinians to Jordan and Egypt, declaring, “I think I could make a deal with Jordan. I think I could make a deal with Egypt.” Trump threatened to withhold aid from countries that refuse to construct concentration camps to hold the Palestinians.

Last week, Trump declared that the Gaza Strip “should not go through a process of rebuilding and occupation by the same people that lived a miserable existence there.” Trump called for “other countries” to “build various domains that will ultimately be occupied by the 1.8 million Palestinians living in Gaza.”

Within days of the announcement, Israeli officials moved to follow Trump’s lead, which conforms to their long-held plans. Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz said Thursday that he had instructed the military to prepare to put Trump’s plan into action. “I welcome President Trump’s bold initiative, which can create extensive opportunities for those in Gaza who wish to leave,” he said.

He added, “I have instructed the IDF (Israel Defense Forces) to prepare a plan” that would include “exit options via land crossings, as well as special arrangements for departure by sea and air.”

In separate remarks to the press on Monday, Trump gave an ultimatum to Hamas to release all Israeli hostages or “Saturday all hell is going to break out.” He added, “If all of the hostages aren’t returned by Saturday at 12 o’clock ... I would say, cancel it and all bets are off and let hell break out.”

Trump’s threat makes clear that the “ceasefire” agreed to by Israel, as the *World Socialist Web Site* warned, is a complete fraud, aiming only to allow Israel to rearm for a new, even more violent phase of genocide and ethnic cleansing against the population of Gaza.

On Monday, the Israeli military announced plans to “significantly reinforce” its positions around Gaza. “It was decided to raise the level of readiness and postpone leave for combat soldiers and operational units in the Southern Command,” the IDF said in a statement. “Additionally, it was decided to significantly reinforce the area with additional forces, for defensive missions.”

In other words, Israel is making plans to renew its onslaught against Gaza in order to implement Trump's plan for the ethnic cleansing of the territory.

This onslaught will be facilitated by the continued flow of US weapons to Israel. On Friday, the US State Department approved the sale of over \$7 billion in missiles and bombs to Israel. Last week, Trump signed an executive order sanctioning the International Criminal Court (ICC), accusing it of having "engaged in illegitimate and baseless actions targeting America and our close ally Israel."

In a statement, Margaret Satterthwaite, the UN Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, warned that she is "gravely concerned" by Trump's sanctions against the ICC.

"By hindering investigations into war crimes and crimes against humanity—including those committed against women and children—the US undermines judicial independence and emboldens perpetrators of atrocity," she said. "This order strikes at the very foundation of international justice, eroding the 'never again' legacy of Nuremberg and possibly violating Article 70 of the Rome Statute," she added.

Satterthwaite was referencing the 1945 Nuremberg tribunal of Nazi leaders which convicted over a dozen leading Nazi officials of war crimes, crimes against humanity and waging aggressive war. The tribunal set the basis for the current functioning of the International Criminal Court, whose role is to criminally prosecute the perpetrators of war crimes.

Israel, meanwhile, is continuing its offensive throughout the West Bank, which has now lasted three weeks and has forcibly displaced 40,000 Palestinians.

On Monday, Secretary of State Rubio defended Trump's plan for the ethnic cleansing of Gaza. "Someone's got to go in ... you've got to clean it up. You've got to clean all that out of there even before you begin the process of removing rubble and debris and rebuilding housing, like permanent structures. Who's going to do that?" Rubio said in a radio interview. "Right now, the only one who's stood up and said I'm willing to help do it is Donald Trump." Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu likewise praised Trump's plan on Monday, calling it "much better for the State of Israel, a revolutionary and creative vision, which we are discussing," adding that Trump "is very determined to carry it out."

To date, 47,583 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli attacks, according to official death tolls, with a recent study published in *The Lancet* estimating the death toll could be 70,000 or more.

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