

One Year On: How to Revive Progress on the Gaza Ceasefire

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Overview

As we elaborate in our [most recent Gaza ceasefire tracker](#), the Board of Peace (BOP), formed to implement Phase II of the ceasefire, is not working as hoped. Its unwillingness to challenge the Israeli government or work alongside other international actors has severely limited its effectiveness. If President Trump and his team are serious about implementing the [20-point peace plan](#), the BOP must forswear the “go-it-alone” approach, which denigrates existing institutions and ignores hard-earned lessons from recent post-conflict experiences. Instead, they should coordinate more fully with complementary initiatives.

Policy Recommendations

Restoring momentum for implementation will require the following steps:

- External pressure on Israel and regional mediators to ensure both Israel and Hamas proceed with implementation of the BOP’s phased disarmament plan.
- Synchronization of the BOP’s efforts with those of the European Union (EU), the Arab League, and other relevant interlocutors.
- Inclusion of key Palestinian and international institutions in policy formulation and implementation of reconstruction activities, rather than their marginalization.

Combined, these steps would provide the BOP with the financing, personnel, and leverage of key actors. Trump’s peace plan would be transformed from a toothless White House initiative into a broadly accepted way forward, capable of reconstructing Gaza and advancing a Palestinian state that is neither governed by Hamas nor occupied by Israel.

The following sections describe the steps necessary to revive momentum for implementation of the ceasefire plan’s Phase II commitments.

Structural Obstacles to Implementation

The purpose-formed BOP was intended to catalyze implementation of the ceasefire agreement’s Phase II elements – above all reconstruction, Hamas disarmament, and IDF withdrawals from Gaza. While [UN Security Council Resolution \(UNSCR\) 2803](#) endorsed the formation of the BOP, its precise membership and mandate were left to be defined by President Trump. From the outset, many [analysts](#) and international actors questioned the viability and legitimacy of the BOP construct and were skeptical of its prospective effectiveness; the EU and many of its member states indeed [hesitated](#) to commit resources to such an unprecedented and highly personalized multinational structure.

The intentional marginalization of existing institutions, including the Palestinian Authority (PA) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), has been counterproductive to the goals of reconstructing Gaza and laying the basis for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state as referenced in [Point 19](#) of the 20-point plan. Ceasefire implementation has also been hampered by the Trump Administration's unwillingness to challenge the [Israeli government's insistence](#) that **complete** Hamas disarmament must precede any actions that would rehabilitate the Strip – and by Hamas' refusal to disarm completely without parallel steps by Israel.

Nikolai Mladenov, the designated BOP High Representative for Gaza, brought significant regional experience from his five years as United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process. However, most members of the [BOP's Executive Board](#) are either U.S. government officials, Trump's family and friends, or individuals with close ties to Israel. Thus, even as [Netanyahu](#) and [several Israeli government officials](#) have openly stated their desires to expand the country's occupation of Gaza and ultimately to [seek the depopulation](#) of its residents, the BOP has deferred to Israeli policy positions. BOP officials have [acknowledged](#) that their ability to confront Netanyahu has been limited due to political sensitivities associated with the anticipated Israeli election, which has loomed on the horizon virtually since the BOP was formed in January 2026.

Defenders of the BOP, most notably former UK Prime Minister [Tony Blair](#), argue that these first 12 months were effectively utilized for planning by the Board's highly capable group of Palestinian technocrats and good-faith interlocutors. With the Israeli elections soon to be in the rear-view mirror, on-the-ground progress may now prove more viable. However, even if opposition parties form a new government in Israel, the status quo is likely to remain the [default position of a new Israeli government](#) and of Hamas absent sustained external pressure.

Restoring Momentum for Implementation of Phase II Commitments

Despite the aforementioned criticisms, many Palestinians and humanitarians – particularly Gazans desperate for concrete actions that will alleviate their suffering – view the BOP as the only body capable of promoting progress in Gaza, at least in the immediate term. Those sympathetic to the Israeli position, including [analysts](#) supportive of the demand that **Hamas disarm completely as a first step**, argue that the BOP model may yet succeed, but may require additional military pressure by Israel on Hamas to eliminate any threat to Israeli security. The events of the past year suggest that both views – treating the BOP as the only game in town and requiring complete Hamas disarmament as a precondition to any Phase II implementation – require reconsideration.

Specifically, BOP-led initiatives must sync up, politically and operationally, with the efforts of the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution (Global Alliance) – which consists of [more than 90 countries](#) and international organizations, including the European Union, the Arab League, and Turkey. These actors can offer the funding, personnel, international legitimacy, and, above all, leverage over both Israel and Hamas that the BOP currently lacks.

In July 2025, the Global Alliance adopted a [shared blueprint](#), which centers the rights of both Israelis and Palestinians to freedom, security, and self-determination. After its September 2026 meeting, the Alliance issued a [statement](#) emphasizing both its support for “the Board of Peace, the Office of the High Representative, the NCAG and the ISF in their respective mandates,” and its commitment that “there can be no separate political future for Gaza. Transitional arrangements must lead to reunification with the West Bank under a single, legitimate Palestinian Government.”

By adopting the Global Alliance’s political vision of a unified, legitimate Palestinian government in Gaza and the West Bank and the eventual establishment of a Palestinian state, the BOP would encourage greater participation in Phase II implementation by countries that are essential to a broader regional settlement, particularly Saudi Arabia. Most importantly, such an approach would shift responsibility for advancing Palestinian statehood from Israel and the BOP to Hamas – with a broad coalition of international actors forcing the organization to choose between keeping its arms and allowing the Palestinians to build a state.

Even if current political realities preclude full integration of the BOP with outside initiatives, it should still coordinate its approach with key players. The perception of a unified international effort could help facilitate the recruitment of forces for an effective International Stabilization Force and increase the pool of funds available for specific Gaza reconstruction projects.

Inclusion of Palestinian and International Institutions

The Board of Peace does not need to continue trying to build a new civilian administration and humanitarian apparatus from scratch. Existing Palestinian and international institutions already possess much of the personnel, infrastructure, and technical expertise needed to administer and rebuild Gaza.

PA institutions continue to operate in Gaza, and the BOP’s unwillingness to coordinate with them undermines its implementation goals. Thousands of civil servants who served the PA before the 2007 Hamas takeover remain on the PA’s payroll. Before PA President Mahmoud Abbas [postponed](#) the legislative elections scheduled for November 28, 2026, the Central Election Commission compiled an updated voter registry containing 1.24 million Gazans and had developed innovative plans for administering elections in Gaza. In addition, the Palestine Monetary Authority continues to exercise supervisory authority over Palestinian banks in both the West Bank and Gaza.

Equally important, the [exclusion of UNRWA staff](#) from reconstruction planning ignores the realities on the ground: [UNRWA employs](#) more than 11,000 staff in Gaza, [providing](#) over 13,000 daily health consultations and [educating](#) at least 280,000 children. And as UNRWA Commissioner General Christian Saunders has [emphasized](#), the agency “has repeatedly asked the Israeli authorities to provide information and evidence to substantiate allegations [of ties to armed groups] against individual UNRWA staff members in Gaza but has received no response to date.”

The BOP should coordinate with and integrate UNRWA into its relief and reconstruction efforts. It should also work with other international groups with demonstrated capacity on the ground. In September 2026, for example, the [European Commission announced two contracts](#) with UNICEF and UNDP to restore access to safe water and essential waste management services. As Dubravka Šuica, EU Commissioner for the Mediterranean, said, “we are ready to do more across other sectors.” The European Commission is also [emphasizing](#) that **“coordination and alignment at all levels is of course necessary to deliver on the ground.”**

Rather than duplicating these institutions, the BOP should assign them defined responsibilities within a coordinated reconstruction plan.

Conclusion

Progress on the above priorities could help narrow the remaining differences between Israel and Hamas over a verifiable disarmament plan. As the BOP recognizes, Phase II implementation cannot wait until Hamas and other militant groups are completely disarmed. The United States and other international actors should encourage Israel to move forward with the [July disarmament plan](#) agreed to by Hamas, while addressing Israeli concerns that Hamas not be allowed to reestablish a military capability. This would also help address the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza’s (NCAG) concern that it cannot effectively govern Gaza while Hamas remains heavily armed. In parallel with progress on Hamas’ disarmament, a credible third-party monitoring facility should be established to allow necessary equipment and reconstruction materials to enter Gaza without compromising Israeli security concerns.

While the immediate reconstruction effort should focus on Gaza, the broader goal of creating conditions for an independent Palestinian state and Israel’s further integration into the region must remain front and center on the policy agenda. In particular, the deteriorating security and economic situation in the West Bank must also be addressed as part of any coherent strategy for advancing a regional solution, as elaborated in J Street’s proposed [23-state solution](#).