



# TRUMP'S "PLAN" FOR GAZA: HOW DID ISRAELI POLITICIANS REACT?

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*February 12, 2025*

President Trump's proposal for the US to take over the Gaza Strip and "relocate" its two million residents was praised by prominent members of Netanyahu's coalition, along with almost all of the country's opposition leaders.

## Key Takeaways:

- Trump's announcement – and the overall enthusiastic support for Netanyahu he showed during the Prime Minister's White House visit – significantly [strengthened](#) Netanyahu's domestic political standing, likely securing his coalition until the fall 2026 elections.
- Defense Minister Israel Katz has ordered the IDF to prepare a plan to operationalize Trump's "transfer" of Gazans, in case Israel and the US decide to implement it.
- Nearly the entire political spectrum in Israel is coalescing behind the proposed ethnic cleansing of Gaza, demonstrating the country's rightward shift since the October 7 attacks.
- There is a notable absence of a true opposition to the Netanyahu government that is capable of proposing an alternative vision for the "day after" in Gaza.

## What was the political context in Israel prior to Trump's comments?

Before the joint press conference with President Trump on February 4, Prime Minister Netanyahu's coalition appeared to be at one of its most fragile points yet. Itamar Ben-Gvir and his far-right Otzma Yehudit party resigned from Netanyahu's government in response to the ceasefire agreement with Hamas that includes the release of Palestinian prisoners, partial IDF withdrawal from Gaza, and a possible permanent end to the war.

In a surprising move, given Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich's [repeated](#) and vociferous opposition to a ceasefire deal, the far-right leader decided to remain in the government. However, he has [made](#) it clear that he would "bring down the government if it does not return to fighting in a way that [leads to us] taking over the entire Gaza Strip and governing it." Given that Phases II and III of the ceasefire agreement [contain](#) explicit provisions for the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and a permanent ceasefire, the prospect of Trump forcing Netanyahu to enter the latter two phases appeared to have the potential to bring down his government.

## How did Netanyahu's allies react to Trump's announcement?

Trump's shock announcement on Tuesday, therefore, not only appealed to the Israeli far-right due to their [years-long](#) desire to "transfer" Gaza's population and resettle the Strip – it also appears to have bolstered the Netanyahu government. Smotrich embraced Trump's proposed ethnic cleansing of Gaza, [calling](#) it "the true response to October 7," and appeared to take his threat of exiting the government off the table, assuming the Trump administration continues to deliver actions that he finds favorable.

Ben-Gvir was similarly overjoyed, [offering](#) to re-enter the government upon the implementation of Trump's plan, even [tweeting](#) "Donald, this looks like the beginning of a beautiful friendship."

More moderate members of Netanyahu's coalition were similarly praiseful; Amir Ohana, the Speaker of the Knesset, [referred](#) to Trump's announcement as the "dawn of a new day," and Defense Minister Israel Katz "[welcomed](#) Mr. Trump's bold plan." Notably, Katz has already [directed](#) the military to prepare a plan for providing exit routes for Gazans seeking to emigrate, and reprimanded the IDF's head of Military Intelligence for [raising concerns](#) about the plan's potential security risks during a military assessment meeting.

### How did the Israeli opposition react?

Israel's key opposition figures also praised Trump following the press conference, reserving their concerns for the logistical or political feasibility of the proposal, rather than morally objecting to the concept of a permanent relocation of Gaza's population. Benny Gantz, the leader of a centrist opposition party, [said](#) Trump had shown "that he is a true friend of Israel," and praised his "creative thinking." Similarly, the leader of the opposition, Yair Lapid, [referred](#) to the event as "a good press conference for the State of Israel." Yair Golan, the leader of Israel's most left-wing Zionist party, the Democrats, was slightly more reserved in his response, [stating](#) that "declarations about transfer are good for headlines, but not for action." It is noteworthy that Golan did not explicitly denounce the concept of mass population transfer, indicating his perception of where the Israeli public and his desired base of support lies.

Direct moral opposition to Trump's proposal came only from Israel's Arab parties. Most notably, Mansour Abbas, who leads the United Arab List, [referred](#) to the proposed transfer as "old Kahanist thinking that normalizes the unacceptable ... It is impossible to carry out a transfer without committing war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide."

### What to watch for in the coming weeks?

- **Ceasefire complications:** Difficulty securing coalition support for the full withdrawal from Gaza, which Phase II of the deal requires, incentivizes Prime Minister Netanyahu to [delay](#) Phase I of the deal. Trump's plan to displace Palestinians from Gaza has further destabilized the agreement, with Hamas [claiming](#) that the plan undermines their confidence in the US' commitment to the phased deal. In a clear sign of the ceasefire's increased fragility, Hamas [announced](#) on February 10 that it was delaying the scheduled release of three hostages until further notice, alleging that Israel had violated the ceasefire agreement. Such delays risk the lives of the [nine living](#) hostages set to be released in Phase I, and may further weaken Hamas' faith in the US and Israel's commitment to entering Phase II. This could cause the deal to collapse, and endangers the 24 living hostages who are set to be released in the deal's second phase.
- **West Bank concessions:** In the same press conference, Trump [appeared](#) open to the idea of Israeli annexation of the West Bank, stating that "people like the idea," and that he will "make an announcement on this issue in the next four weeks." This four-week timeline coincides with the date by which the second phase of the ceasefire deal is supposed to kick in, suggesting that Trump may offer significant concessions in the West Bank in exchange for Smotrich remaining in the government for the second phase of the ceasefire.