

The Gaza Roadmap: Essential Conditions from Israel's Perspective

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The new Gaza roadmap, formulated within the framework of President Trump's Board of Peace, seeks to translate the 20-Point Plan and UN Security Council Resolution 2803, having approved it from a conceptual framework to a detailed implementation plan. On the one hand, it modifies some of the security assumptions on which these documents were based; on the other hand, it may represent the only practical framework for transferring power from Hamas and establishing an alternative governing authority in the Gaza Strip. As the framework becomes established as the political framework for the "day after" and enjoys broad American and international support, Israel's ability to influence it simply by rejecting it is steadily diminishing. Consequently, the central question is not whether to adopt or reject the roadmap, but rather how to shape the mechanisms of verification, enforcement, demilitarization, and withdrawal so that they re-anchor the security guarantees that were weakened or omitted from the roadmap, and ensure not only the transfer of power from Hamas, but also the prevention of its ability to regain strength.

The Gaza Roadmap: A Change in Course, Not in Objectives

The new Gaza roadmap is designed to serve as a framework for implementing President Trump's 20-Point Plan, approved by Security Council Resolution 2803. The roadmap does not propose an alternative political settlement to these foundational documents, which it adopts. Rather, it establishes the framework for executing the arrangement set out in them. The strategic objectives remain largely intact: ending Hamas rule, establishing an alternative Palestinian government, demilitarizing the Strip, a phased Israeli withdrawal, rehabilitation, and a political horizon. Ostensibly, this is a technical document intended to translate principles into timelines and implementation mechanisms. In practice, however, the roadmap alters the meaning of some of the principles established in the foundational documents. It shifts the center of gravity of the arrangement from achieving a defined security end state through the dismantling of Hamas's military power and the demilitarization of Gaza to managing the transition period and stabilizing the Gaza Strip.

This shift is reflected in nearly every component of the framework. Responsibility for disarmament is transferred from the International Stabilization Force (ISF) to the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG); an International Verification Committee (IVC) is established to approve the transition between the various phases of the arrangement; and mechanisms are added to regulate the police, personal weapons, and intra-Palestinian reconciliation. Conversely, the roadmap scales back or even omits important elements that were at the heart of the foundational documents, including the emphasis on demilitarization and de-radicalization of the Gaza Strip, the operational role of the ISF in demilitarization, the explicit requirement to prevent the rebuilding of Hamas's military infrastructure,

and some of the guarantees that accompanied the Israeli withdrawal. At the same time, the roadmap leaves key security issues open, deferring them to the implementation mechanisms to be formulated at a later phase to determine how they will be achieved.

The dispute that arose with the publication of the roadmap illustrates the significance of this shift. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [announced](#) that Israel rejects the roadmap. He clarified that Israel would not withdraw from its positions before Hamas is disarmed of "heavy weapons, less heavy weapons, all weapons." Conversely, Nickolay Mladenov, High Representative for Gaza of the Board of Peace, [explained](#) that Israel is not required to withdraw before verified demilitarization measures are carried out, emphasizing that the agreement covers all types of weapons and that if Hamas fails to meet its commitments, the process will simply come to a halt. The very need for external clarifications to the roadmap exposes its vulnerability: security guarantees that were defined more explicitly in the foundational documents are not anchored in the roadmap with the same degree of clarity, and some of the decisions that will determine their practical meaning were deferred to the phase during which the implementation mechanisms are formulated.

The Shift in the Concept of Demilitarization and Implementation Mechanisms

The central shift in the roadmap concerns the concept of demilitarization. In the Trump plan and the Security Council resolution, demilitarization was a defined security objective upon which the entire arrangement rested. It included the dismantling of Hamas's military capability, the destruction of military, terror, and offensive infrastructure and the prevention of their rehabilitation, alongside permanently decommissioning weapons. The Trump plan added de-radicalization as a complementary objective, under the assumption that dismantling Hamas's military capabilities would not be sufficient as long as the mechanisms of education, incitement, recruitment, and public legitimacy that enable its resurgence remain intact. Demilitarization was viewed not merely as a security measure, but as a broad process requiring a fundamental change in the Strip's political and social environment, at the end of which "Gaza will be a deradicalized terror-free zone that does not pose a threat to its neighbors." Demilitarization and de-radicalization thus defined not only the process, but also the end state the arrangement sought to achieve: a Gaza Strip without an organized military capability and without the conditions that would enable its renewal.

The roadmap alters the definition of demilitarization and its end state. It establishes a process of "decommissioning" and "storage" of heavy weapons, military production sites, depots of weapons, and tunnels, alongside the disarmament of militias. Personal weapons are not subject to an explicit requirement of disarmament, but rather to regulation, licensing, and enforcement under Palestinian law. The roadmap does not include an explicit requirement to destroy and prevent the rehabilitation of Hamas's military infrastructure. It leaves the end state of demilitarization ambiguous, focusing instead on consolidating control over weapons under a single authority, a process at the end of which only the NCAG will hold, store, and control weapons in Gaza. From Israel's perspective, this is not a semantic shift but a substantive gap: removing weapons from Hamas's control is not equivalent to destroying them, and storing weapons under supervision is not equivalent to eliminating the ability to reuse them.

The roadmap does not include a parallel objective for de-radicalization, but instead proposes a mechanism for a "social peace agreement" designed to regulate relations among Palestinian factions, reduce the risk of violent conflict between Hamas, Fatah, clans, and other armed organizations, and

enable the NCAG to establish its authority. This is a mechanism for stabilizing the Gaza Strip during the transition period, but it is not a substitute for de-radicalization. It may stabilize the political system in the short term, but it does not address the ideological, social, and institutional infrastructure that fuels hostility toward Israel and could enable Hamas to rebuild its strength or give rise to other extremist entities.

Accordingly, the approach toward Hamas shifts as well. In the foundational documents, Hamas is primarily the subject of the arrangement: it is excluded from governance, its military capability is to be dismantled, and its infrastructure is to be destroyed. The roadmap denies Hamas continued control over the Gaza Strip, requiring it and the other factions to transfer governance and security authorities to the NCAG, and forbidding them from interfering in its affairs during the transition period. However, it does not reiterate the blanket prohibition set out in the Trump plan, which stipulated that Hamas and the other factions would play no role whatsoever in the governance of Gaza. The roadmap establishes such an explicit prohibition only with respect to members of militias that collaborated with Israel, but not with respect to Hamas. From Israel's perspective, this is a major point of vulnerability: the roadmap relies on Hamas's cooperation in a process designed to dismantle its power, without a clear enforcement mechanism should it violate its commitments or cease to cooperate. At the same time, it strips Hamas of its rule and military power, but not its continued existence or political and social influence, and does not determine its status following the transition period.

The shift in the concept of demilitarization is accompanied by a change in its implementation mechanisms. The Trump plan and the Security Council resolution placed the International Stabilization Force (ISF) at the center of the security arrangement. They tasked it with: destroying Hamas's military infrastructure and preventing its rehabilitation, permanently decommissioning the weapons of all armed organizations, securing the Gaza Strip's borders in cooperation with Israel and Egypt, preventing smuggling, protecting the civilian population and humanitarian aid, training the Palestinian police, and operating a security coordination mechanism. In addition, the ISF was intended to assume responsibility over the areas evacuated by the IDF, establish security control within them, and participate in determining the milestones for the Israeli withdrawal. The Security Council resolution even authorized it to use "all necessary measures" to carry out its tasks. Under this model, the ISF is not a supervisory or supporting force, but rather the executive body upon which the implementation of the entire arrangement rests—the supreme security authority in the Gaza Strip until the transition to the new Palestinian government is completed.

The roadmap alters this model fundamentally. The responsibility for demilitarization, consolidating weapons, dismantling militias, managing internal security, and enforcing the principle of "One authority, One law, One weapon," under which security control and enforcement in the Gaza Strip are to be concentrated in a single authority, is transferred to the NCAG. Demilitarization is no longer led by an international force, but by a Palestinian transitional authority with international backing. The ISF ceases to be the entity responsible for demilitarization and becomes merely a force for stabilization, training, and assistance. It remains primarily responsible for maintaining separation between the IDF and areas under NCAG control, monitoring the ceasefire, training the Palestinian police, and securing humanitarian aid. Beyond this, it may assist the NCAG upon its request, and is prohibited from carrying out policing tasks or managing Palestinian society. It no longer leads the demilitarization process nor serves as the primary enforcement mechanism of the arrangement, functioning instead only as a

supporting element to the International Verification Committee (IVC), a body established by the roadmap.

Unlike the foundational documents, which relied on independent monitors, the roadmap establishes a Verification Committee to oversee demilitarization throughout the process. The IVC verifies the dismantling of heavy weapons, tunnels, weapons-production sites, and the breakdown of militias; however, it also reviews violations, approves the transition between implementation phases, and is even authorized to extend the timelines established under the arrangement. In doing so, the roadmap turns the IVC into a central body in implementing the arrangement, while leaving unresolved questions that will determine its power and the credibility of its decisions. The document does not define the criteria for completing demilitarization, the evidentiary threshold required to approve each phase, or the status of intelligence information in the event of a dispute, nor does it grant the committee enforcement or sanctioning powers. At the same time, the composition of the committee, which is meant to include representatives of the Peace Council members and guarantor states, makes Qatar and Turkey almost natural members. However, the document does not specify how the independence of verification will be guaranteed or how the influence of states involved in advancing the arrangement will be limited when determining whether its conditions have been met. From Israel's perspective, the IVC's decision-making rules, composition, and independence are issues of strategic importance that directly affect the progress and completion of demilitarization, which could require proceeding with the withdrawal even when Israel considers that the security objectives have not yet been achieved.

These changes also have implications for the IDF's withdrawal mechanism. The Trump plan and the Security Council resolution stipulated that each phase of the withdrawal would be contingent upon the completion of security milestones, granted Israel and the International Stabilization Force (ISF) a central role in determining its timing, mandated that any territory evacuated by the IDF be transferred to ISF responsibility, and conditioned further withdrawal on effective security control and stability on the ground. At the same time, they preserved the possibility of a continued Israeli presence in the security perimeter as long as a terrorist threat or the risk of renewed military buildup remained.

The roadmap adopts the principle of a phased withdrawal, but does not re-anchor the full set of guarantees designed to ensure that the withdrawal does not precede the creation of the new security reality. It links the withdrawal to progress on demilitarization, but does not define the extent of demilitarization required to enable each phase of the withdrawal, who will bear operational responsibility for areas vacated by the IDF, whether the transition between phases is also contingent on effective security control, or how violations of the arrangement will be addressed. These issues are largely left to the determination of the IVC, the NCAG, and the implementation mechanisms. In doing so, the roadmap shifts the allocation of risk: rather than the security guarantees being an integral part of the arrangement itself, they depend on how it is interpreted and implemented after its approval.

Implications for Israel

From Israel's perspective, the roadmap shifts a significant portion of the security risk from the terms of the arrangement to its implementation. It preserves the objective of dismantling Hamas's power, but defines demilitarization less clearly than the foundational documents, transfers primary responsibility for its execution from the ISF to the NCAG, and replaces international enforcement with Palestinian responsibility under the oversight of an international mechanism whose authority and decision-making

rules have yet to be fully established. The roadmap assumes that these mechanisms will ultimately dismantle Hamas's power, but leaves key decisions to the implementation phase, including the scope of demilitarization, the conditions for transitioning between phases, the response to violations, and the consequences should the process fail. In this sense, the roadmap does not guarantee the complete dismantling of Hamas and does not preemptively neutralize the risks inherent in the process.

However, it is difficult to ignore the shift it represents. From Israel's perspective, in the reality that has emerged after nearly three years of war, it is currently the only practical framework on the table for dismantling Hamas's military power and establishing an alternative governing authority in the Gaza Strip. In these respects, it comes closer to Israel's stated war objectives than any framework presented to date. It does not offer the ideal arrangement, but rather an arrangement that can be formulated given the strategic reality that has emerged and the political constraints facing all sides. Therefore, it must be evaluated not against a theoretical ideal arrangement, but against the realistic alternatives available to Israel: continued fighting, a prolonged occupation of the Gaza Strip, or preservation of the status quo—alternatives that likewise carry costs, risks, and uncertainty.

Even if Israel were to receive full international legitimacy to continue the fighting, and even if the IDF were to completely dismantle Hamas's military power, the campaign would not end there. Preventing Hamas's return would require Israel to occupy the entire Gaza Strip, maintain control over it for an extended period, govern a population of more than two million people in a devastated area, provide essential civilian and governmental services, maintain public order, and continuously thwart Hamas's attempts at reorganization. Such a course would entail heavy security, economic, diplomatic, and social costs. Yet even after bearing those costs, the fundamental strategic question that military force alone cannot resolve would remain: Who will replace Hamas when Israel ends its control of the Gaza Strip?

No less importantly, the roadmap is no longer a theoretical proposal, but a framework that enjoys broad American and international support. As political consensus coalesces around it, Israel's room for maneuver to reject it without presenting a viable alternative narrow. Hamas's response to Israel's rejection illustrates the risk: while Israel rejects the framework in its current form, Hamas has declared its commitment to the roadmap and its phased implementation. This gap could allow Hamas to leverage Israel's refusal to strengthen its influence over the shaping of the process while simultaneously portraying Israel as the party derailing it, even when Israel's objections concern substantive security guarantees that have yet to be established. The result could be growing pressure on Israel to accept the framework precisely at the phase when the issues that will determine its security implications are being decided, while its ability to influence them diminishes.

From this, Israel's position must be derived. The roadmap does not require Israel to accept the arrangement as it stands. On the contrary, because it leaves significant decisions to the formulation of the implementation mechanisms phase, particularly those governing verification, oversight, and enforcement, Israel still has an opportunity to influence their design. To a large extent, it is there that the practical meaning of the arrangement will also be determined.

Shaping the Arrangement and Managing the Risks

Israel's rejection of the roadmap in its current form should be translated into concrete demands for its revision and their incorporation into the implementation mechanisms that have yet to be finalized, rather than rejection of the framework itself. Mladenov's clarifications regarding the scope of

demilitarization and conditioning the withdrawal on the implementation of verified demilitarization steps narrow part of the gap, but do not resolve it as long as they are not anchored within the framework itself.

The principal challenge for Israel is to ensure that the verification, enforcement, and withdrawal mechanisms restore the security guarantees weakened in the roadmap, so that the arrangement does not merely remove Hamas from power, but also guarantees that it is denied the ability to rebuild its strength.

First, the clarifications provided for the roadmap must be incorporated into written commitments, and the security guarantees established in the foundational documents but weakened or omitted from the roadmap should be reinstated. It is not enough to anchor the principles themselves: they must be translated into operational rules stipulating what must be achieved prior to each phase, the criteria by which compliance with the objectives will be measured, who will be authorized to verify their completion, and the consequences if they are not met or are violated after having been certified as complete.

Second, the end state of demilitarization must be defined in binding and measurable terms: which weapons will be destroyed or permanently decommissioned, how tunnels, production facilities, arms depots, and other military infrastructure will be dismantled, and how their reconstruction will be prevented. Demilitarization must also extend to the organizational infrastructure that enables the use of military force, including its chain of command, intelligence and command-and-control system, recruitment mechanisms, and sources of funding, in order to prevent it from rebuilding its military capabilities following disarmament.

Third, an unequivocal link must be anchored between verified demilitarization and the Israeli withdrawal. Each phase of the withdrawal must be explicitly conditioned in advance on the completion of defined security milestones, their verification, the deployment of an alternative entity with operational responsibility, and effective security control on the ground.

Fourth, since the IVC is expected to determine whether the conditions for transitioning between phases of the arrangement have been met, its composition, powers, and decision-making rules should be a central focus of Israel's negotiations. It is essential to ensure that the committee is professional and independent, with robust verification and oversight powers, and that its decisions are based on measurable criteria, evidence, and professional assessments. To the extent that Qatar and Turkey are represented on the committee, safeguards should be established to prevent either of them from independently determining whether Hamas has fulfilled its commitments, and to ensure a central role for the United States. The committee must be authorized to conduct unannounced and follow-up inspections, obtain full access to sites and information, draw on Israeli and American intelligence, reopen a phase that has already been approved if new information emerges, and operate under a clearly defined procedure for appeals and the resolution of disputes.

Fifth, the division of responsibility between the NCAG and the ISF must be clarified. It should be defined who is responsible for taking action if demilitarization is not carried out voluntarily, who is responsible for preventing smuggling and renewed military buildup, who assumes control of territory vacated by the IDF, and who is authorized to respond when the NCAG is unable to enforce its authority. Without clear

answers to these questions, responsibility may be formally allocated without ensuring the enforcement capabilities required to carry it out.

Sixth, a clear mechanism for addressing violations and failure of the process must be established in advance. The roadmap should specify what happens if Hamas refuses to surrender weapons, if undisclosed tunnels or depots are discovered, if the NCAG fails to establish effective control, or if the demilitarization mechanisms collapse. A material breach by Hamas must automatically halt further withdrawal and reconstruction and allow the reopening of a previously approved phase. The violations mechanism must stipulate that a breach requires remediation and carries a concrete consequence: the forfeiture of the benefit tied to compliance with that phase. A violation discovered following a withdrawal will require remediation and forfeit the withdrawal tied to the next demilitarization milestone.

Finally, Israel should seek to secure explicit American and international guarantees ensuring that a material failure of the implementation mechanism will not leave it bound by an arrangement that no longer fulfills its security purpose, including explicit recognition of its right to resume military action against a renewed threat if the mechanisms established under the arrangement are unable to eliminate it.

Conclusion

Rejecting the roadmap in its current form does not necessitate a rejection of the entire framework. On the contrary, the ambiguities that remain create room for Israel to influence the terms of its implementation and turn clarifications and understandings into binding guarantees. If Israel succeeds in anchoring a measurable definition of demilitarization, conditioning every phase of the withdrawal on the achievement of verified security objectives, establishing an effective mechanism for addressing violations, ensuring the independence of the Verification Committee, and preserving its right to act in the event that the arrangement fails, it will be possible to mitigate the risks inherent in the framework and transform it into one that better serves Israel's interests. Its core potential lies in bridging together two objectives that the military campaign alone has difficulty guaranteeing simultaneously: permanently dismantling Hamas's military power and establishing of a governing alternative capable of maintaining effective control of the Gaza Strip and preventing its resurgence.

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