



# GAZA PEACE COUNCIL: BETWEEN POST-UN ORDER VISIONS AND FINANCIALIZATION OF DIPLOMACY

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## INTRODUCTION

**T**he second phase of the Gaza cease-fire marks a turning point in Middle East geopolitics, as traditional alliance structures are shaken and the concept

of “transactional diplomacy” associated with U.S. President Donald Trump’s diplomatic approach takes concrete form in the region. The Gaza Peace Council established under Trump stands out as a radical model that seeks to bypass the United Nations structure and trans-

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form the region's future through a "shareholder-based" system of governance. A formal invitation letter sent by Trump on Jan. 16, 2026, to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan confirms that Türkiye has been called to the table as a "founding stakeholder" in this new experiment in global governance. For Ankara, the invitation can be interpreted as the highest-level recognition by the international system of the regional guarantor vision it has advocated for years, although the council's conversion of Gaza's reconstruction into a global investment process is among its most heavily criticized aspects.

Politically, one of the US' most striking moves has been to invite Türkiye and Qatar to the council while excluding Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu from the process altogether by not even informing him of its formation. Statements by U.S. officials to the Israeli press that "the United States is dealing with Gaza and Netanyahu should focus on other matters" stirred debate in Israel, while the current situation amounts to a declaration that Israel's traditional veto power over U.S. foreign policy has come to an end under the Trump doctrine. Through this move by Washington, Türkiye has gained room to negotiate

Gaza's future not through Israel's security-driven dictates, but directly with the U.S. via leader-level diplomacy.

At present, Türkiye is shaping the council's emerging architecture by advancing reservations and objections, some of which have already been accepted, and is emerging as one of the actors capable of preventing Gaza from turning into a neo-colonial zone of trusteeship. Türkiye's guarantor-based approach to Gaza ensures that the council does not limit itself to purely finance-driven decisions, instead safeguarding an evolution toward Palestinian sovereignty. Set to be launched globally at the 2026 Davos Summit, this new framework offers Türkiye significant room for maneuver both on the ground in Gaza and at the negotiating table, particularly in matters related to the management of GREAT Trust (Gaza Reconstruction, Economic Revitalization, and Transformation Fund) funds. In this context, Türkiye's place within the current alliance architecture—framed by a narrative that foregrounds the rights of Gazans and what it describes as Israel's nearly two-year-long genocide—can be seen as an important opportunity for Gaza's reconstruction and for the protection of Gazans' rights throughout the process.

## THE COUNCIL'S FORMATION PROCESS

The institutional origins of the Gaza Peace Council trace back to the "20-Point Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict," the most radical diplomatic initiative of Trump's second term in the White House, officially announced on Sept. 29, 2025. Following the unveiling of the plan, one of the fastest institutionalization processes in diplomatic history, the Gaza issue began to be dominated less by the language of occupation and more by a global investment discourse marked by strong financial overtones, particularly after the ceasefire that took effect on Oct. 10, 2025.

The process was formally enshrined in international law through U.N. Security Council Resolution 2803, adopted on Nov. 17, 2025. The resolution effectively transfers authority by moving Gaza's future outside the U.N. bureaucracy and delegating implementation on the ground to the Peace Council. It stipulates the end of Hamas rule in Gaza and the temporary handover of governance to non-political Palestinian technocrats. Throughout every stage of the process, Türkiye emerged as a central actor in preventing the Security Council decision from turning into a displacement plan

detrimental to the Palestinian people by placing two conditions on the table: the uninterrupted delivery of humanitarian aid and the non-annexation of Gaza. The resolution can be seen as a concrete success of the diplomatic track Türkiye established with Egypt and Qatar. Ambiguous language contained in the draft's initial versions was revised in favor of the Palestinians thanks to the coordinated reservations of these three countries. The jointly defended provision requiring the "uninterrupted delivery of humanitarian aid with full access," which was incorporated into Article 11 of the resolution, is a legal move aimed at preventing aid from being used as a tool of political pressure. In addition, the "Türkiye-Egypt Joint Declaration" issued in Ankara on Nov. 12, 2025, reinforced the emphasis on Gaza's territorial integrity and carried this principle into the Security Council resolution, effectively removing any annexation or displacement plans from the agenda.

The most significant turning point in the council's history came with the "second phase" decision announced on Jan. 14, 2026, by Steve Witkoff, Trump's special envoy for the Middle East. With this phase, the council moved beyond its role as a ceasefire monitor and

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World leaders pose for a family photo ahead of the Sharm El-Sheikh Peace Summit in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, Oct. 13, 2025. (Turkish Presidency via AA)

evolved into a massive reconstruction project backed by the GREAT Trust fund, which promises to transform Gaza into a "technology oasis." This historical trajectory demonstrates that the Peace Council is not an ad hoc crisis mechanism, but a systemic structure shaped by a 14-year preparatory process that brings together the technocratic governance models developed by Tony Blair since 2011 and Trump's vision of transactional diplomacy. As the process advances, Türkiye's sustained and visible objections and criticisms remain among the key factors capable of preventing the council from turning into an instrument of "neocolonial governance."

### NETANYAHU SIDESTEPED AND THE NEW ALLIANCE ARCHITECTURE: ANKARA-DOHA AXIS

With the announcement of the Peace Council's founding members in January,

Trump invited President Erdoğan and the Qatari leadership to join the council without prior notification to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu. This move concretely demonstrates a shift in the regional status quo in Ankara's favor and formally confirms that Washington has effectively invalidated Israel's strategy of excluding regionally influential actors such as Türkiye and Qatar from the Gaza equation. The fact that Türkiye was invited in this process signals that Ankara is viewed not only as a humanitarian aid provider but also as a core stakeholder in Gaza's security and reconstruction. That Trump took this decision despite all behind-the-scenes efforts by the Netanyahu government to keep Türkiye and Qatar out of the equation underscores the erosion of Israel's traditional veto power over U.S. foreign policy. This development has opened an area of autonomy within the council in which Türkiye can directly participate in decision-making and implementation processes, independent of

Israel's ideological constraints.

A second critical move in which Netanyahu was bypassed was Qatar's inclusion in the system. Despite Netanyahu's repeated accusations that Qatar sponsors terrorism, Trump's decision to invite Doha to both the council and its executive board demonstrates that transactional diplomacy in regional policy has overcome ideological blockages. The prospect of Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and his Qatari counterpart, Ali al-Thawadi, sitting side by side on the executive board could enable Ankara and Doha to form a joint regional balancing force against "neocolonial trusteeship" approaches in Gaza. The presence of these two actors can be seen as a major safeguard against the council becoming a one-sided "Israeli security mechanism."

## 2026 DAVOS SUMMIT AND THE SHAREHOLDERS OF PEACE

The Davos World Economic Forum (WEF), which opened its doors on Jan. 19, 2026, is positioning itself as a stage for the global launch of the Gaza Peace Council and a display of

its influence to the international community. Although European Union countries might distance themselves from the U.S. due to the Greenland agenda—potentially reducing their participation at the opening meeting<sup>1</sup> on Jan. 21—the council's decision to hold its first session in Davos rather than at the U.N. headquarters signals Trump's redefinition of Gaza's reconstruction: no longer a purely diplomatic process, but an "economic venture" from which stakeholders profit. This choice is a clear example of transactional diplomacy, which approaches peace through a "boardroom" logic rather than international law. Trump's message to the world via Gaza underscores that diplomacy and international politics are now, above all, the responsibility of "shareholders" holding billions in capital and operational power, rather than career diplomats.

The absence of Gaza's name anywhere in the council's charter, along with the lack of temporal references, has led analysts to interpret it as the first institutional experiment aimed at a post-U.N. world, beyond the council's stated purpose.<sup>2</sup> Designed on the logic of an international corporation, where

Trump's redefinition of Gaza's reconstruction: no longer a purely diplomatic process, but an "economic venture" from which stakeholders profit.

1 "Trump to hold Board of Peace signing ceremony in Davos, but participants may be limited", *The Times of Israel*, 20 January 2026.

2 "Trump's 'board of peace' appears to seek wider mandate beyond Gaza", *Al-Jazeera*, 18 January 2026.

donors contributing \$1 billion or more are designated as permanent members, this model carries the risk of subjecting negotiation and peace processes to market rules. However, the participation of actors like Türkiye, known in international politics for its moral reference points and consistency, can be seen as a stabilizing factor within this framework.

Türkiye stands out with a stance opposing the transformation of massive projects—such as the Gaza port, energy infrastructure, and digital networks—into a “neo-colonial plunder,” advocating instead that these investments proceed only if they serve regional integration. Accordingly, the council also has the potential to provide a platform where Türkiye’s “guarantor doctrine” can gain visibility on the global stage. Another key element is that the platform, initially on the periphery for Israel, could allow Türkiye to form a bloc with Qatar and Egypt.

## THE COUNCIL'S STRUCTURE AND OPERATING MECHANISM

The Gaza Peace Council was built on a three-tiered structure that, under the Trump administration's transactional diplomacy doctrine, combines traditional diplomatic hierarchy with a corporate-style management model. At the top is a high council, personally chaired by Trump, where strategic decisions are made. This tier serves as the main body financing global peace initiatives, and its membership is organized entirely according to a “shareholder governance” model. Under the draft charter, member countries wishing to hold a permanent seat must contribute at least \$1 billion in cash. States that make this payment are exempt from the standard three-year rotation and gain “permanent stakeholder” status, turning the council into a “pay-to-play”

mechanism where financial clout is directly linked to political veto power. This structural design has prompted interpretations that the council's authority is intended to extend beyond Gaza, potentially positioning it as a post-UN global authority alternative.

At the council's seven-member top tier, alongside Trump are White House figures such as Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Middle East Special Envoy Witkoff, and Deputy National Security Advisor Robert Gabriel, as well as World Bank President Ajay Banga. In addition, figures like Jared Kushner, Marc Rowan, and Tony Blair occupy the upper council, reflecting the real direction of the Gaza reconstruction plan. Kushner is seen as the key architect behind the GREAT Trust, which envisions Gaza being rebuilt as the “Riviera of the Middle East” in the post-genocide period, defining Gazans more as local stakeholders than as owners of the land. Blair is also a major figure in shaping the council's architecture, which is largely financialized and stripped of both fund and political references.

The council's 11-member executive board can be seen as a reflection of Trump's pursuit of operational efficiency and financial clout. The board includes Turkish Foreign Minister Fidan, Qatar's Minister of Strategic Affairs al-Thawadi, Egypt's intelligence chief Hassan Rashad, the United Arab Emirates (UAE)' Minister of International Cooperation Reem Al Hashimy, former UN Secretary-General Sigrid Kaag, and Israeli businessperson Yakir Gabay, alongside figures such as Witkoff, Kushner, Blair, and Rowan. The figures in the council's upper and middle tiers represent two main approaches to Gaza's future. The dominant group is composed of finance and investment figures who view Gaza not as a crisis zone but as one of the Mediterranean's most



US President Donald Trump delivers a speech during the Board of Peace session held as part of the 56th World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland, Jan. 22, 2026.

valuable real estate and logistics projects. At the center is Kushner, who seeks to transfer his architectural role from the Abraham Accords to Gaza, managing it according to a “free trade zone” model. Accompanying Kushner is Rowan, CEO of U.S.-based alternative asset management firm Apollo Global Management, whose roughly \$8.8 billion in managed assets by the end of 2025 positions him as the primary driver of the council’s market-oriented decisions. The diplomatic legitimacy of this highly controversial financial plan is provided by former British Prime Minister Blair, who has spent more than a decade working on technocratic governance models. Due to his role in the U.S. invasion of Iraq, Blair is also the most controversial figure within the council.

The presence of Israeli real estate billionaire Gabay on the executive board is seen as an effort to link Gaza’s reconstruction project with both the Israeli real estate market and the global property market. Beyond being an Israeli real estate tycoon, Gabay is the founder and largest shareholder of Aroundtown, a Luxembourg-based company that ranks fourth in Europe and first in Germany in terms of size. Gabay also holds Greek Cypriot citizenship and primarily resides in Greek Cypriot and the U.K., and he is known to have closer ties to Trump than to Netanyahu.<sup>3</sup> In this context, Gabay’s potential to attract investors from the global real estate market to Gaza may be of particular interest to Trump.

<sup>3</sup> “Great-grandfather bought land in Gaza for the Yishuv, descendant joins Trump Board of Peace”, *YNetGlobal*, 18 January 2026.



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan attends the signing ceremony of the Sharm el-Sheikh Agreement in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, Oct. 13, 2025.

The board serves as the central authority managing the “GREAT Trust” fund, which oversees all critical portfolios from Gaza’s reconstruction to its security. The fund has drawn intense criticism for aiming to move Gaza toward a new financial model based on digital assets.<sup>4</sup> Its most notable feature is the emphasis on “digital fractional ownership.” Under this system, future revenues from major projects—such as ports, power plants, or internet networks built in Gaza—would be divided into small digital shares. Investors around the world could purchase these shares and become stakeholders in the projects. In this way, the massive resources required for Gaza’s reconstruction would be raised not

primarily from governments but directly from private investors.<sup>5</sup>

Established under UN Security Council Resolution 2803, the Gaza Administration—led by Dr. Ali Shaas and composed entirely of Palestinian officials—is a 15-member technocratic body responsible for civil governance in Gaza. Born in Gaza in 1958, Ali Shaas earned a bachelor’s and master’s degree in civil engineering from Ain Shams University in Cairo in 1982, followed by a Ph.D. in civil engineering with a focus on urban planning from Queen’s University in the U.K. in 1989. Shaas, who previously held senior bureaucratic positions in planning, transportation, and development within the Palestinian National Authority, now

4 “This article is more than 4 months old Leaked ‘Gaza Riviera’ plan dismissed as ‘insane’ attempt to cover ethnic cleansing”, *Guardian*, 1 September 2025.

5 “The GREAT Trust. From a Demolished Iranian Proxy to a Prosperous Abrahamic Ally”, *The Washington Post*, 29 August 2025.

oversees Gaza's civil administration during the reconstruction process, distinguishing himself as a technocrat.

The bloc formed by Türkiye, Qatar, and Egypt has the potential to serve as the strongest barrier against the economic-centric approach, preventing Gaza from becoming a property controlled by financial markets. Türkiye's presence through Fidan allows it to act as a supervisory voice, countering the purely financial agenda of Kushner and Rowan while representing security concerns, the continuity of humanitarian corridors, and the preservation of Palestinian political unity. Similarly, the inclusion of al-Thawadi from Qatar's Strategic Affairs Office—invited to the board by Trump despite Netanyahu's attempts to exclude Doha—elevates the combined influence of Türkiye and Qatar within the council to a balancing force.

One of the implementers responsible for technical execution and coordination on the council is Bulgarian diplomat Nickolay Mladenov, who, as a high representative, serves as a "technical arbiter" approved by both regional countries and Israel, representing the critical link between the council and

Palestinian technocrats on the ground. UAE Minister of International Cooperation Al Hashimy manages the council's global logistics and aid coordination, ensuring operational continuity. Türkiye's strategic success at this table will hinge on Fidan's ability to build a "third way" that places Palestinian sovereignty at the center, bridging Kushner's "real estate-focused" peace plan and Blair's "technocratic trusteeship" model.

## **TRANSACTIONAL DIPLOMACY, GUARANTORSHIP, AND TÜRKIYE**

The Peace Council emerged as one of the most radical post-UN order concepts during Trump's second presidential term, challenging the traditional pillars of the international system. It is built on the idea of transactional diplomacy, where peace relies less on international legal texts and more on the consent, operational capacity, and financial commitments of direct stakeholders. Seeking to bypass the complex bureaucracy of the UN Security Council, its veto blocks, and rhetoric grounded in values but detached from on-the-ground realities, Trump centralized authority in himself and selected strategic stakeholders, positioning the council as the sole

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legitimate executive authority in the region.<sup>6</sup> As of January 2026, the U.S. trend of withdrawing from numerous international organizations can be seen as a declaration that global governance is moving from a "law and diplomacy" era of states to one led by executive boards.<sup>7</sup>

In this context, alliances are structured not around abstract rhetoric but around a hierarchy shaped by concrete contributions. The transactional diplomacy principle of "pay to play" is embodied in the council's \$1 billion membership requirement for permanent status.<sup>8</sup> As it appears, for Trump this council is not only a body for resolving issues specific to Gaza but also a globally applicable template for managing crisis regions such as Venezuela or Ukraine with a corporate board-like governance model. In this system, the traditional U.N. peacekeeping force could be supplanted by an international stability force directly overseen by the council and run like a professional organization.

## CONCLUSION

Although the mechanism carries an approach that could

create deep problems in Gaza, it offers Ankara the opportunity to express its long-standing regional guarantor model at an institutional level. Türkiye's current stance revises the Trump administration's transactional diplomacy model by integrating the region's historical realities and the legitimate rights of Gazans. In this new phase, in which Netanyahu was bypassed in the council's formation and Ankara is perceived as a key actor, Türkiye's presence, despite its objections during the council's establishment, creates a mechanism that could align Gaza's societal realities with the technocratic reconstruction process.

The Gaza Peace Council serves as a concrete laboratory for the post-UN evolution of global governance from a law-based system to a "shareholder-based" and transactional model. Shaped under Trump's leadership, this new architecture financializes diplomacy through billion-dollar funds and technocratic boards while profoundly challenging traditional alliances and Israel's entrenched veto power in Washington. The council's vision of

6 "The 'Board of Peace' and the rise of transactional diplomacy". *CGTN*, 20 January 2026.

7 "United States withdrawal from 66 international organizations: a new step in a disengagement initiated in 2025". *FOCUS 2030*, 13 January 2026.

8 "Trump's board of peace is an imperial court completely unlike what was proposed". *Guardian*, 22 January 2026.

transforming Gaza from a crisis zone into a global investment arena centered on digital assets and real estate carries the risk of subjecting humanitarian issues to market rules. At this juncture, the neo-colonial trusteeship represented by figures such as Kushner and Blair remains the most prominent focal point of criticism regarding the council's legitimacy.

Türkiye's being invited to the table as a founding stakeholder can be interpreted as a pragmatic recognition of Ankara's long-standing regional guarantor doctrine. Through the balancing bloc it has formed with Qatar and Egypt, Türkiye stands as the sole actor capable of preventing the council from becoming

merely a financial plunder mechanism. Türkiye's strategic presence, represented by Fidan, carries the potential to serve as a supervisory voice against approaches that see Gaza solely as an economic "real estate project," advocating instead for Palestinian sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the continuity of humanitarian corridors. Ultimately, this new framework, inaugurated at the 2026 Davos Summit, opens the door to an era in which global politics is increasingly managed by, in effect, shareholders rather than diplomats, while providing Türkiye with a hybrid maneuvering space to safeguard both regional stability and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

## About the Author

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He completed his undergraduate studies in Political Science and International Relations at Marmara University. He earned master's degrees in political science and international relations from Istanbul Şehir University and in Israeli Studies from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His academic interests include the history of Zionism, Jewish modernization in the Ottoman Empire, modern Jewish political thought, and Israeli politics. Fluent in English, Arabic, and Hebrew, Dikmen is pursuing his doctoral studies in the History Department at Stanford University.



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