

# Trump's "Deal of the Century": Turning West Bank "Cantons" into Mini Gaza Extermination Zones?

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*The Trump proposal, based on Israel's wish list, appears to be designed to slowly exterminate most of the Palestinians living under Israeli control by creating "cantons" — reservations — that will mimic Gaza's isolation and lack of access to necessities of life. Along with the wide adoption of the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism as criticism of Israel and the banning of BDS (boycott, divestment and sanctions) against Israel, it appears that Israel will be able to carry out a slow extermination policy against most of its Palestinian population — citizens as well as those now under occupation — with impunity.*

Trump's proposal —with zero legal legitimacy— gifts Israel many benefits it has long dreamed of:

- the annexation of choice Palestinian land including Jerusalem, the fertile Jordan Valley and all sea access;
- the essential deportation of many Palestinian Israeli citizens to Palestinian "cantons";
- the "right" to reject all Palestinian refugees; and
- the rejection of any compensation to Palestinians.

The 181-page description of the proposal, which exudes racism and contempt for Palestinians, effectively denies that Palestinians were forced from their homes, ignores their right to their property and compensation, blames them for "terrorism" despite their (at least) 80:1 death rate with Israelis over the past decade and ignores Palestinians' *legal* right to use force to attain freedom and self-determination.

Fifty billion dollars from the Gulf states, *which may or may not materialize and may be in the form of loans*, is supposed to be forthcoming to appease Palestinians. To add insult to injury, the Palestinians will not be permitted to administer this funding: Israel, with its long history of skimming from the top of donations to Palestinians, will almost certainly administer any funding. *While Germany has paid at least \$100 billion (so far) to the Jewish/Israeli communities as compensation for damages in WW II, Israel has yet to pay anything for its theft of a country, the contents of homes and businesses and for the many thousands of those it murdered and maimed.*

The document calls for a four-year implementation period, which could spell the death knell for Palestinian rights. Benny Gantz, Netanyahu's rival in the upcoming election, called for this document to be the starting point for further negotiations. Although Benjamin Netanyahu wanted to immediately start the annexation of parts of the occupied West Bank, the US and Britain called for a delay.

## The “Deal of the Century” definition of Palestinian “statehood”

Trump’s “deal” offers no sovereignty, no freedom and no equality under the law for Palestinians. The description of the separate Palestinian “cantons” — more accurately described as reservations — describes conditions of isolation potentially more profound than Gaza’s.

The proposal defines in detail how the Palestinian “cantons” will be under total Israeli control. These sites, carved out of occupied Palestinian territory, constitute Palestinian communities that had already been stripped of their agricultural land and access to water. They have no exclusive economic zones or access to seas or borders that were part of their territory. As described by [Bill Van Auken](#), the maps:

“show a patchwork of Palestinian cantons surrounded by Israeli territory, linked one to another by a series of Israeli-controlled bridges, tunnels and roads. The cantons themselves are peppered with what the plan describes as “Israeli enclave communities,” i.e., Zionist settlements that will be walled off, linked by apartheid-style Israeli-only security roads, and protected by Israeli security forces. On the map are five areas inside the supposed Palestinian territory that are marked as “strategic sites,” i.e., Israeli military bases. The statement moreover makes clear that the 15 “enclaves” listed cannot be interpreted as “all-inclusive.”

The inmates of these “cantons” — open air prisons — will have few rights. Palestinians must recognize Israel as a “Jewish state,” relegating Palestinian Israeli citizens to a subordinate status. They must renounce any resistance (“terrorism”) to Israel’s colonial control and those in Gaza must give up their weapons. The “cantons” would bar any refugees — Palestinians from the wider diaspora. Imports and exports would have to pass through Israel, making the “cantons” vulnerable to possible Israeli siege. While over 140 countries have recognized Palestine, Palestinians would not be permitted to have any international treaties unless specifically approved by Israel. Palestinian “agreement” to permanent Israeli occupation could negate some protections under international law.

The cause for concern: the world’s acquiescence with Israel’s slow genocide of Gaza

*Nothing Israel has done to slowly exterminate Gazans has generated significant world outrage. Israel has enjoyed total impunity from every one of its genocidal actions in Gaza:*

- Israel’s devastating bombing campaigns of 2006, 2008/9, 2012, and 2014 that killed thousands and made hundreds of thousands homeless was met largely with world silence.
- Despite signing an agreement with the World Bank in November, 2005 to allow Gaza access to outside markets, Israel started to block access intermittently the following January, 2006; it started the ongoing blockade of food and humanitarian supplies the following September, 2006.
- Israel’s siege of Gaza was intensified in September 2007 to what was compared to Warsaw Ghetto-like stringency, limiting caloric intake, similar to the Nazi scheme, to keep Gazans near starvation. Israel did not honor its two agreements with Hamas to end this siege. This siege initially included soap and detergent, making its genocidal intent obvious.
- Along with the siege, Israel attacks Gaza fishermen as well as farmers whose

fields are within hundreds of meters from Israel's "buffer zone" that takes in an estimated one third of Gaza's farmland (much of which Israel sprayed with poison in January, 2020). Although the Oslo Accords allow Gaza fishermen to fish up to 20 miles from the coast, fishing crews are attacked and boats confiscated frequently within the allowed zone.

- Israel has ensured that Gazans have virtually no potable water; it even rejected a French offer of a water purification unit for Gaza in 2014. Israel violates its obligation to ensure the functioning of Gaza sewage treatment, which contaminates the Mediterranean as well as parts of Gaza and its drinking water.
- Israel continues to keep Gazans incarcerated on land that the UN declared would be unable to sustain life by 2020 because of its contaminated soil and water; this point was thought to have been reached by 2017.
- Israeli snipers killed hundreds and injured tens of thousands of unarmed Gazans who attended weekly peaceful demonstrations after Friday prayers from March 2018 until Dec. 2019 demanding an end to their incarceration. Medics and the press were specially targeted, as well as children and handicapped.
- Israel continues to attack Gazans with almost daily bombing or drone attacks.
- Also, despite laws and a recent UN Security Council resolution against the plunder of Palestinian resources, Israel is believed to be stealing Palestinian gas off Gaza, a resource that could allow Gazans normal lives.

Despite Israel's brutality towards an imprisoned and defenceless population — genocidal acts that would cause outrage if they occurred in any other country — mainstream media censor the daily atrocities while publishing only stories of Jewish victimhood. *The media's silent complicity to Israel's slow extermination of Gazans and apartheid treatment in the West Bank does not bode well for Palestinians who may be incarcerated in West Bank "cantons".*

Negating the United Nation's laws and international humanitarian legislation

These proposals make a mockery of international law, and pose a direct challenge to the UN and protective legislation that the world community supposedly guarantees. This is the law of the jungle on steroids.

While genocidal treatment should be unacceptable for any defenceless civilians, Israel's treatment of Gaza is particularly egregious because all Palestinians under its occupation (in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem) are supposed to have their human and civil rights guaranteed by various United Nations' Security Council resolutions and the Fourth Geneva Convention. This convention, which governs Occupying Powers' treatment of civilians living under military occupation is supposed to ensure that the civilians are treated with respect, given access to adequate necessities of life, including food and water, have the right to return to their homes, and are not mistreated in any way. Occupying Powers are not only prohibited from moving any of their own population into occupied territory, they are also *prohibited from plundering or annexing any of the territory.*

All signatories to the Fourth Geneva Convention, basically the world community including Israel, have the contractual legal obligation to hold those responsible for gross breaches — by definition war crimes and crimes against humanity — legally accountable. The United States has ensured that this is not respected: when Mary Robinson, head of the United Nations Human Rights Commission, demanded in 2001 that the world community step up to

the plate and honor this obligation, she lost her position. UN SC resolutions that attempt to protect Palestinians are typically vetoed by the United States. While Palestinians might have held out hope that their “guaranteed” legal rights would ultimately be respected, Trump’s proposal aims to end that possibility.

Legislation criminalizing criticism of Israel enables the slow extermination of Palestinians

Criminalization of either boycott or criticism of Israel as anti-Semitic racism are the final steps that would allow Israel greater political freedom to carry out a protracted elimination of the indigenous Palestinians.

The IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) definitions of anti-Semitism (passed in Britain, France, Germany and Canada) encourage censorship of Israel’s treatment of Palestinians. IHRA definitions of racism include: calling Israel a racist endeavor; accusing Israel or Israelis of “blood libel” such as mass murder of non-Jews; comparing Israeli policy to that of the Nazis; or blaming Jews for the State of Israel’s actions. *Unfortunately, the possible accuracy of such observations could be irrelevant and considered “anti-Semitic”.*

Israeli activist [Miko Peled](#) believes that *“the reality for Palestinians will not improve until Zionism is condemned, a roadmap to a democratic free Palestine is put in place, and refugees are allowed to return to their homeland.”*

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*Featured image: Israel has occupied the West Bank since 1967 [Nurphoto]*

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