

THE GAZA

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By **Shira Sorko-Ram**

There's a new sheriff in town—and he wants to solve the most complex and intractable conflict in modern history. This conflict has defied resolution for decades though many nations and leaders have worked to solve it. Can it be solved? No one knows. That dreaded October 7th day that Hamas brutally attacked Israel with its clear intent to inflict as much pain and damage as possible, will forever be a sword in the hearts of thousands of Israelis who lost family, friends and neighbors in the massacre. The return of hostages over the past year and a half from Gaza has been agonizingly slow, mostly a trickle here and there—and each time in exchange for hundreds of murderous terrorists.

The reunions of hostages with their families are a collision of joy mixed with pain as hostages learn of loved ones who did not survive. The process drags on, and the wait becomes increasingly difficult. Most of the hostages remaining are believed to be already dead. And still, Israel will release hundreds more of living terrorists to bring them home.

With a heart held captive in Gaza, Israel remains a nation in trauma. Mourners protest in the streets and in the Knesset, screaming for their missing children, parents and grandparents who are slowly dying of starvation, or lying dead in some tunnel. The emotional heaviness is beyond description.

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If you visit the land, you'll find that words fail you too—the depths of misery broods beyond language.

Israel's left-wing media has its own agenda. It demands that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu end the war today, no matter what the cost. He must negotiate with Hamas to get all hostages back. Today! "Let Hamas continue to rule Gaza for now," they say. "If we are a moral nation, our priority must be to bring back every one of the hostages regardless of sacrifice."

In all the frustration, people are looking for a resolution. How will we address the on-going situation after the war? Who will rule Gaza? Will Bibi make sure that the Palestinians get enough food and supplies? "What is your solution, Benjamin Netanyahu? Why don't you have a solution?"

What's the Problem?

The problem is, there is no solution outside of God. Many people think the fight is simply about land, identity and the right to self-rule. But the truth is much simpler. One side wants the other dead and the other side wants to stay alive. If Palestinians wanted a country, they would have had one by now. Most people don't remember that Israel offered numerous times a Palestinian state. Yes, a two-state solution with East Jerusalem as its capital! Each time, the offer was rejected.

The reasons are numerous, but here are a few. *First*, accepting a Palestinian state would signal the end of the blame-Israel-for-everything era and

the beginning of taking responsibility for the several million Arabs who identify as Palestinians. Building your own nation is much harder than trying to destroy someone else's.

Second, despite the abject poverty of Palestinians, Palestinian leaders are all millionaires and billionaires—yes with a B. That alone should tell you how the game is being played. Finding a solution would mean ending the flow of "pity funding" that pours in from around the world. Even now world leaders are meeting to put together the billions it will take to rebuild Gaza! And for what? We all know the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.

So far, Hamas remains in power and openly says they simply want to prepare for another October 7th—only bigger and better. In this war alone, hundreds of thousands of people on both sides had to evacuate their homes for over a year. Just over 2,000 Israeli civilians and soldiers have been killed and thousands more wounded. In Gaza, the estimated numbers of more than 45,000 Palestinians killed, with at least half being terrorists, and another 100,000 injured, are hard to verify as Hamas does not differentiate between civilians and terrorists. Furthermore, they regularly place people in harm's way as human shields and are documented shooting their own people. Regardless of the details, the cost of life has been high.

New President. New Plan.

This past month the world was shocked as they finally witnessed the evidence of Hamas' torture as three starved hostages surrounded by masked terrorists were paraded on a makeshift stage. One hostage, Eli Sharabi, was even forced to address the crowd and share of his joy that he would soon be reunited with his wife and daughter—despite the fact that Hamas knew they had tortured and brutally murdered them on October 7th.

The new U.S. President stared at the pictures of these emaciated hostages plucked from Hamas' tunnels. To this, he declared bluntly: "They are in really bad shape; they have been treated brutally, horribly. They look like they've aged 25 years; they literally look like the old pictures of Holocaust survivors. I don't know how much longer we can take that."

Chaim Goldberg/Flash90



Families of hostages and other supporters protest slow progress in release of hostages—and include effigy of Netanyahu in prison clothes due to his current criminal court cases.



Ali Hassan/Flash90



Ali Hassan/Flash90

Ohad Ben Ami (left) returned to the arms of his family while Eli Sharabi (right) only discovered upon release that his family (pictured) had been murdered October 7th.

The Plan - A Decade or More to Clean Up

A few days before this event, Trump had invited Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to the White House. It was then that he dropped a bomb that literally shook the world.

Trump declared he had a solution for the Gaza quagmire. He would buy up Gaza, or maybe just take it over and assume control. He would need no American soldiers in Gaza. Nor would he need to spend U.S. tax money, as he would assemble and organize a consortium of large commercial construction enterprises.

His plan would be to build a large megacity like Singapore, or Dubai. A paradise along the Mediterranean Sea. As Mike Huckabee, the new ambassador to Israel said, "I think we will see something of biblical proportion happen with his leadership in the Middle East."

To give some perspective of the magnitude of this war—*two-thirds of all structures in Gaza are destroyed*. The World Bank estimated \$18.5 billion in damage. The U.N. estimates that the war has littered Gaza with over 50 million tons of rubble. With over 100 trucks working full time, clearing it all would take more than 15 years. Could be more!

The entire area is precariously unstable with massive tunnels in all grades of damage and underground cavities that would certainly collapse if new structures were built on top of them. Most importantly, if Hamas remains in power, the cement and metal pipes and other rebuilding materials sent by compassionate nations would for certain be diverted—not for homes, but for more tunnels and rockets, fueling the cycle of destruction rather than reconstruction.

Trump Plan 2: Clean (and Empty) Slate

Understanding that raising families in rubble for years is not a humane option, Trump proposed voluntary evacuation for the 1.7 million Gazan to other lands. He felt certain that civilians would ultimately embrace this opportunity because who would want to live in a demolition dump?

One could argue, the plan is of Biblical origin—removing a problematic people from the land they lived on and let the land rest—just like God did with Israel. By the time Gaza is rebuilt, the hope is that Palestinians would have found a better life away from the identity of a victimized people who need to murder other people in order to have a home.

The World Blows Up

As you can imagine, the Muslim world, together with all its comrades in the Western world and the UN exploded in great wrath! “This is genuine massive genocide!” they cried, “A crime against humanity!” Egypt and Qatar are meeting, furiously searching for another solution—like bringing in the Palestinian Authority to take over and keep the Palestinians in Gaza at all costs. They even declared they could clean up in a fraction of the time—still many years.

But, why the uproar? After all, in the past decade or so, many millions of Muslims have migrated to numerous nations. Turkey has accepted 3.5 million Syrian refugees. Lebanon took in 1.5 million Syrian refugees. Jordan absorbed 1.3 million Syrians. Egypt provided refuge for 500,000 Syrian refugees. In the last 50 years, Europe took in some 15 million Arabs.

Why the sudden opposition? Why would the world demand that Palestinians stay put? In rubble. In tents. With no electricity or water in many places.

Two reasons.

First, deep down, devout Muslims still theologically believe Israel should not exist. If for that reason alone, Palestinians must remain in Gaza to keep the vision for Palestine alive.

Most people don't remember that Israel offered numerous times a Palestinian state. Yes, a two-state solution with East Jerusalem as its capital! Each time, the offer was rejected.



Palestinian children in Lebanon raised in a culture of violence and aggression. Lebanon battled invasion of Yasser Arafat and Palestinian militants for over a decade in the 1980s.

Second, Palestinians are historically a threat to their host nation, not just Israel. This means that releasing millions of Palestinians into any Middle Eastern country can very quickly destabilize it. This is not just theory. It is recent history.

The Big Obstacle

Trump's first destination choice for Palestinian migration would be in Jordan and Egypt. This is where the plan hits a significant snag. The

THE GAZA CYCLE OF DESTRUCTION

The Gaza-Israel conflict has seen numerous military operations over the years.

Below is a chronological list of significant operations involving Gaza:

Reuters

1986



Young school girls walk by as Gazan men frisked for weapons after a Jewish man stabbed in Israeli-ruled Gaza

2005



Jewish Villages in Gaza Destroyed

All Jews evacuated from Gaza

Reuters

2006



Hamas Expels Fatah from Gaza

2002: Operation Defensive Shield
2002: Operation Determined Path
2004: Operation Rainbow
2004: Operation Days of Penitence

Reuters

José Nicolas / Hans Lucas via Reuters Connect

evacuation destination is too close. To send Palestinians to Jordan or Egypt means keeping them on our Israeli borders.

It is true many of today's Palestinian Arabs are originally from Jordan and Egypt, but over the years, their culture has evolved into a separate and very dangerous entity. *Palestinians must never ever be moved to Jordan or Egypt. Never.* These nations are already fighting serious instability.

Both Egypt and Jordan are petrified to have these jihadists, including radicalized citizens, settle in their country. Just over a decade ago, Egypt's president al-Sisi actually staged a coup to overthrow far-right Muslim Brotherhood President Mohamed Morsi who planned to make Sharia the law of the land. The Muslim Brotherhood was the launching pad for Hamas. Al-Sisi has little love for any pro-Hamas activities.

Even before Jordan was recently flooded with Syrian refugees, the kingdom could be described as perpetually wobbly. Decades ago, Jordan's King Hussein also had to respond with a full-scale military assault against Palestinians when Arafat tried to kill the king in 1970. Thousands were killed and Palestinians fled to Lebanon. Palestinians brought their war culture with them and Lebanon, known as the Switzerland of the Middle East, dissolved into civil war.

Chairman of the Israel's Knesset's Foreign Affairs, Yuli Edelstein, is very concerned about Donald Trump's plan: *"Immigration from Gaza should be directed to*

more distant countries," he said. "Israel is not interested in subjecting border countries [like Jordan and Egypt] to the process that Lebanon went through" [a 15-year disastrous war when Arafat's Palestinians invaded, from which Lebanon has never yet recovered]—"certainly not ones with which we have a solid peace agreement." [Jordan and Egypt]

A Change of Biblical Proportions

On a practical level, now that the idea of evacuating the premises has been thrown out there, it really is the only viable option that has been laid out. Even Israeli villages attacked near Gaza were evacuated because they were uninhabitable. Rebuilding southern Israel will take years, but because in Gaza the tunnels and terrorist infrastructure include undiscovered weapon stashes, it is estimated it will take many years to prepare the ground for rebuilding. Even the UAE ambassador to the U.S. said he sees no alternative to Trump's Gaza plan.

Perhaps, Trump doesn't intend to evacuate Gaza. Perhaps his threat is designed to be the opening bid



Khalil Kahlout/Flash90

THE PRESENT
GAZA WAR

Weapons in Mosque Targeted



2008

Reuters

Hamas Street Justice for Palestinians



2014

Reuters



2023

Chaim Goldberg/Flash90

October 7, 2023

- 2008:** Operation Cast Lead
- 2012:** Operation Pillar of Defense
- 2014:** Operation Protective Edge

- 2021:** Operation Guardian of the Walls
- 2022:** Operation Breaking Dawn

Family lights fire for cooking and warmth in the remains of what was once there home. Two thirds of structures in Gaza are destroyed and many Hamas booby trapped structures remain in residential areas.

Reuters

in a negotiation to remove Hamas from power. In fact, within days of Trumps declaration, nearby Arab countries got together to brainstorm options never offered before. Even Hamas scoffed for several days but then offered to leave Gaza, “for the sake of the people.” Not that we trust their intentions. Islamic terrorists are famous for changing their messaging while keeping the same mission. But, the Middle East seems to understand the message from Trump, “If you don’t fix this, I will.”

On a spiritual and historical level, we can look at the Scriptures and see times where even Israel was removed from the land because they had become so corrupt. Their return to the land in the days of Nehemiah went hand in hand with their returning to God’s ways.

Historically, other people groups in the area who rebelled against the plan of God were destroyed completely—sometimes by the Israelite army, sometimes supernaturally by God Himself.

What this could mean is, an exile of Palestinians today is an act of mercy. There are many Muslim countries around the world who have the same language, the same culture, similar food and religion. This is a once in a lifetime chance that offers hope that in a different setting Palestinian Arabs can raise a family, work normal jobs and detox out of their culture of death.

Normal societies don’t call home to tell proud parents of raping and torturing and murdering for the fun of

it. For now, Gaza’s Palestinians know nothing more than a life a hate and victimhood. Few people who advocate for Palestinians understand how this hatred breeds violence and abuse within these Arab communities.

So now that real options are on the table it is time for the Body of Believers to pray that:

1. **God will turn the hearts of world leaders to recognize that the Palestinian’s vicious, brutal and savage culture is destructive for Israel, her surrounding countries and ultimately the free world.**
2. **God will provide a place for Palestinians to live (ideally where they will have the freedom to encounter the Gospel!)**

Such a miracle would be on a level with the parting of the Red Sea. But it won’t be the first time God has rescued an entire people group from bondage, and given them another chance. The coming years may require massive adjustments as world leaders attempt to resolve the situation in Gaza. Our hope, however, is that whatever it looks like, it won’t be another round of the same. ■

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Shalom from Jerusalem,

Last year Maoz **focused heavily on the practical needs of our evacuees and soldiers in our land (and we will continue to do this!).**

This year, we are highlighting our global outreach. **Why global outreach?**

First, Israel was always called to be a light to the nations. We were blessed so that we could bless the families of the earth. Second, Israel really needs to be seen and heard right now in nations that do not have exposure to what is happening here spiritually or physically.

Maoz has **EIGHT official ministry branches** located outside of Israel—**US, Canada, UK, Ireland, Germany, France, Korea and Brazil.** Each ministry branch is tasked with sharing God's plan for Israel in their country and serving the Jewish community in their area.

Maoz Español and **Maoz Arabic**, are unique in that they are language-based and borderless in their outreach.

Perhaps **Maoz France** is most unique in that it is both a physical branch in France as well as called to serve French speaking people all over the Middle East and Africa.

And this is where you come in!

First—if you are in these countries and would like to connect with our team, we'd love to hear from you! Second, if you want to see Israel's voice be heard in these nations you can get in on this!

This year we are sending a ministry team to France and Africa to **reach Muslims and nominal Christians who have never heard the full Gospel (yes! This is a real thing!).**

The Arabic outreach will cost **\$67,000** and the French **\$96,000**—and we have **90 days** to raise this.

Whether your heart burns for a foreign people or not, the Muslim infiltration into Europe—and into Christian theology is a **clear and present threat to the freedom of the Gospel everywhere.** This is why we are leaving the comfort of our homes and families to go out and worship and speak in these communities. **And you can be a part of sending us there!**

In His service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kobi and Shani Ferguson".

Kobi & Shani Ferguson

Kobi Ferguson
President & CEO

Shani Ferguson
COO





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