

The "15-Point Agreement" with Hamas

A Historic Opportunity for a Real Change in Gaza

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The agreement between the Board of Peace and Hamas (July 2026) was achieved with the close assistance of Egypt and Muhammed Dahlan, who exerted pressure and convinced Hamas leadership to accept the 15-point agreement, taking advantage of the fact that Hamas was left without any hope that international pressure could bring an end to the Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip as long as Hamas refuses to disarm.

The agreement does not meet the maximalist demands of the Israeli government. Nevertheless, it does constitute an opportunity for a real change in Gaza and can lead to the relinquishment of Hamas political rule in the Gaza Strip and to a process of disarmament and demobilization. Within this framework under the guidance of the Board of Peace, the National Committee for the Administration of the Gaza Strip, (NCAG) will be able to destroy the weapons and control the human resources in the institutional system.

The Movement's transition to purely political activity depends not only on Hamas but also on the positions and the conduct of two key players involved - Israel and the U.S. administration. If these parties, in coordination with the Palestinian Authority (PA), accept a political role for Hamas, this would support its transformation into a political party. However, if the doors are closed to it, Hamas will retain its power and will cling to a violent struggle.

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Background

After eight months of negotiations, accompanied by meetings and discussions with numerous parties in the Egyptian capital, Cairo, as well as in Turkey and Qatar, Hamas has finally agreed to the “Roadmap” presented by Nikolay Mladenov, representing the “World Council.” The roadmap, signed on 31 July 2026, consists of 15 points and includes the handing over of heavy weapons to the National Committee for the Administration of the Gaza Strip, known as “NCAG.”

The Movement’s agreement to hand over its weapons to the committee came after two disputed key sections in the agreement— article 5 and article 8 — were amended. These points concerned **weapons and employees’ rights**. The amendments provided Hamas with a publicly acceptable price for giving up its weapons: **an Israeli withdrawal** from the Gaza Strip, the beginning of recovery, and an easing of the severe suffering that the people of Gaza have endured for approximately three years.

The decision taken by Hamas at the final meeting held in Cairo, which U.S. President Donald Trump described as “Historic”, could, if implemented, **represent a real transformation in the reality of the Gaza Strip**. It could move Gaza from a region that has almost been destroyed completely, onto a path toward recovery, reconstruction, and long-term stability.

The Essence of the Agreement

The agreement is based on a "formula" - disarmament of Hamas and demilitarization of the Gaza Strip in exchange for the withdrawal of the Israeli military forces from Gaza territory. Under this formula, NCAG, as selected by the board of Peace, would **assume temporary civilian and security administration of the Gaza Strip as an alternative rule for Hamas**.

The agreement stipulates that “heavy weapons” will be placed exclusively under the Palestinian committee’s control. In private meetings, officials from both sides — Hamas and the “Board of Peace” — acknowledge that the phrase “placing weapons under the committee’s control” ultimately means **removing these weapons from the Gaza Strip altogether**. At the latest meeting, which was attended by Israeli-American businessman Liran Tagman, the two sides agreed on the details of a gradual disarmament process to take place simultaneously with the Israeli withdrawal over a period of up to 208 days.

The weapons that Hamas and other armed factions - including Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Popular Resistance Committees, and others - will hand over, includes missiles, launchers, manufacturing workshops, tunnels, and weapons stores.

The handover of weapons from these factions to NCAG will take place simultaneously with the Israeli withdrawal and the entry of local police forces affiliated with the committee.

One participant in the final round of negotiations explained the process as follows: The Israeli army withdraws from Shati refugee camp; Hamas and the other factions then hand over the tunnels, workshops, missiles, and stores to the committee. An independent team from the International Stabilization Forces (ISF) and the Board of Peace then arrives to inspect the area, ensure that the

transfer process has accounted for all weapons, materials, and facilities agreed upon, and verify that everything has been handed over. The parties then move on to another area, such as Beit Hanoun or Jabalia refugee camp. If either side stops carrying out its obligations, the other side will also stop implementing its commitments. Thus, **if Hamas and the factions fail to hand over the weapons to the committee in a particular area, Israel will halt its withdrawal and return to that area.**

Personal Weapons

According to the agreement, members of Hamas will be allowed to retain personal weapons for self-protection, if they keep them in their homes and do not take them into public spaces. The Movement has also agreed that the new police force will deal with any weapon that appears in public in accordance with Palestinian law. This means detaining the person carrying it, questioning him, and potentially confiscating the weapon.

Those who possess personal weapons will be required to comply with Palestinian laws by registering their weapons and obtaining licenses for them from the new authority in the Gaza Strip.

The Destruction of Weapons

NCAG will have the final say on the weapons handed over to it. The understandings regarding the fate of the weapons — which were not written into the agreement itself but were reached between Hamas and the mediators, including the American side — centered on the **“disposal and destruction” of these weapons, including the workshops, stores, tunnels, missiles, and launchers associated with them.**

Hamas officials say that once the agreement has been fully implemented — from the handover of weapons to the withdrawal of the Israeli army, to the committee assuming control of Gaza — **the committee will have the authority to decide what happens to these weapons.**

The committee will operate under the leadership of the Board of Peace, which selected its members, entrusted them with this mission, and oversee their work. The Board also pays the salaries of NCAG members and employees and provides it with the budgets and funds necessary to carry out all aspects of its work. Consequently, **the Board of Peace will ultimately have the decisive say regarding the fate of these weapons.**

Reasons Behind the Change in Hamas’s Position

The real reason behind Hamas’s agreement to hand over its weapons is the absence of any remaining hope that external factors could bring an end to the war, end the Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip, and alleviate the suffering of its 2.3 million residents.

The ceasefire agreement reached between the Movement and Israel in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, in October 2025, did not lead to a genuine end to the war or to the end of the Israeli occupation of the Strip. On the contrary, the Israeli army continued its operations through air and artillery strikes,

killing more than 1,250 people and causing thousands of injuries, most of them in targeted operations against leaders, cadres, and members of the Movement, many of them together with members of their families. The Israeli forces also continued expanding Israel's control along what is known as the "Yellow Line" which had expanded from 52% of the Gaza Strip when the first Sharm El-Sheikh agreement was reached to 70% of the territory.

As for Hamas, its control has been reduced to less than 10% of the area of the Strip, concentrated in densely populated areas. The remaining 20% consists of areas that have been destroyed and rendered uninhabitable. Though the war has destroyed most of Hamas's military and governance capabilities, the Movement has managed to reorganize what remained of its power and assumed its control over the small remaining territory.

The Symbolism of Weapons

After three years of a devastating war, Hamas no longer has much weaponry left, and its position on **handing over those weapons is more symbolic than practical.**

Hamas members say: "We are a national liberation movement, and a national liberation movement cannot hand over its weapons to its enemy. If it does so, it will face historical accountability before future generations. In the end, we agreed to hand over the weapons to a Palestinian party, NCAG, which shields us from the political implications of a step of this magnitude. We did not hand over the weapons to Israel, the Board of Peace, or the international forces. If the committee destroys these weapons, that is its decision, not ours. History will not hold us accountable, and future generations will not judge us."

In practical terms, Israel controls 70% of the Gaza Strip, and most of the tunnels, workshops, and weapons stores are in these areas. Israel has already destroyed many of them, leaving only a small amount that will be handed over to the committee after the Israeli withdrawal from those areas.

Strict Restrictions on Rearmament

The agreement also includes a commitment by Hamas to halt all forms of military activity, including arming, training, manufacturing, and tunnel construction.

The Movement received a clear message from the American side, which participated directly in these negotiations: Any violation of the agreement by Hamas — for example, conducting training, establishing weapons-manufacturing workshops, or digging tunnels — would lead to the collapse of the agreement and the resumption of Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip.

Room for Maneuver

Over the past three years, Hamas had placed its hopes on external factors to stop the war and force an Israeli withdrawal. In the first phase, it hoped that the so-called "Axis of Resistance" would come to its aid, particularly Hezbollah, Iran, the Houthis, and Iraqi militias, which Hamas expected would

enter Syria during era of Bashar al-Assad rule and from there move toward the Golan Heights or Lebanon to join the fighting.

At later stages, Hamas placed its hopes in the Israeli public putting pressure on the government to end the war in exchange for the release of the hostages. It subsequently relied on popular demonstrations that erupted in capitals, cities, and universities across Western countries, particularly the United States, Britain, and France. At a later stage, it placed its hopes in its belief that U.S. President Donald Trump preferred solutions and deals over wars.

For many months of negotiations, the Movement also sought to persuade the American side to accept a compromise based on a long-term or open-ended truce, under which the Movement would halt all military activities — including training, manufacturing, smuggling, and tunnel construction — in exchange for an end to the war and an Israeli withdrawal. Israel, strongly backed by the U.S. administration, firmly rejected this proposal.

After Hamas exhausted all these options and calculations, it found itself facing the reality that an Israeli withdrawal and the recovery and reconstruction of the Gaza Strip could not be achieved without agreeing to some mechanism for handing over its weapons.

The roadmap therefore offers the Movement a less painful way forward: handing the weapons over to the Gaza Administration Committee, meaning a Palestinian party. This effectively strips the step of much of its heavy political and historical significance for the Movement.

The Israeli Condition

Hamas strongly rejected the Israeli condition that it must hand over all its weapons before Israeli forces withdraw. Movement officials say that accepting this condition would amount to outright suicide, because Israel would enter the populated areas the day after the weapons were handed over and arrest or assassinate the remaining leaders, cadres, and members of the Movement.

One movement official said: “This condition leaves us with one of two choices: **either you are killed while carrying your weapon, or you are killed or arrested after handing over your weapon. Clearly, the first option is better for every member of the Movement.**”

Egyptian Role

The acceptable way out for Hamas came from the Egyptian negotiators, who have never stopped searching for a solution in Gaza over the past three years. The main reason for Egypt’s persistent involvement is the geopolitical factor. The Gaza Strip lies on Egypt’s border, and Egyptian territory constitutes the Strip’s only external outlet, as the only border crossing out of Gaza is the Rafah crossing with Egypt.

Throughout the past three years, Egypt has faced serious concerns about the displacement of Gaza’s residents into its territory and their transformation into refugees seeking every possible military and political means to return to their homeland, as happened with Palestinian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon, along with the political instability that accompanied their presence in both countries.

Egypt presented Hamas with numerous proposals for dealing with the weapons issue, ranging from storage and concealment to handover and other arrangements, eventually arriving at **the latest formula, which appeared acceptable: placing the weapons exclusively under the control of the Gaza Administration Committee, meaning handing them over to the committee, which would subsequently destroy them.**

The Employees

After an agreement was reached on the weapons issue, addressed in article 8 of the plan, an agreement was also reached on employees' rights in article 5. Under this arrangement, the committee undertakes to protect the financial rights of employees who will continue working with the new committee, as well as those who will be dismissed from public service because of their affiliation with Hamas.

The agreement also stipulates that the committee will assume responsibility for the debts accumulated by Hamas's administration in Gaza to private-sector service providers, including pharmaceutical companies, public-works companies, and others. These debts amount to \$400 million. The money will be paid directly to the private-sector companies rather than through the Movement.

There are more than 50,000 government employees in Gaza. Because of declining government revenues, these employees currently receive a flat payment of 1,000 shekels once every three months. Before the war, government employees in Gaza received 60% of their monthly salaries, amounting to 126 million shekels per month, in addition to 14 million shekels in operating expenses.

The capacity of Hamas's government administration declined sharply during the war because of falling tax revenues, leaving it unable to maintain even this limited percentage of its employees' salaries. Nevertheless, Hamas is managing to adapt to the new situation and to obtain funds from these sources in a way that will allow it to gradually stabilize economically.

Mohammed Dahlan: The Hidden Mediator

Former Palestinian Authority official Mohammed Dahlan, who is close to the president of the United Arab Emirates, played an important role in reaching the agreement through his meetings with officials from various parties, including the United States, Israel, and Hamas.

Shortly before the agreement was reached, Dahlan met with David Zini, head of Israel's Shin Bet security service, where they discussed opportunities and possible scenarios for a solution in Gaza.

Over the past three years, Dahlan has held a series of in-depth meetings with Hamas leaders, beginning with his first meeting with former supreme leader Ismail Haniyeh in Doha, Qatar, in 2024, followed by a series of meetings in Cairo, Egypt.

The focus of all these meetings was on finding a way to bring the war to an end. **Dahlan told the Movement's leaders in all these meetings that resolving the issues of the hostages and weapons was the only gateway to ending the war.**

Dahlan and Egyptian intelligence chief Hassan Rashad ultimately secured Hamas's agreement in principle to disarm in a manner that would preserve the Movement's "national dignity": handing the weapons over to a Palestinian party, which would subsequently deal with them through destruction, whether by melting them down, encasing them in concrete, or using other methods.

NCAG will probably not retain these weapons, workshops, stores, or ammunition under any circumstances, for reasons that are compelling to all parties. Hamas understands that retaining these weapons could prompt Israel to invade the Gaza Strip again to seize them.

Israel Could Achieve Two Objectives

If implemented, the agreement would give Israel two major gains: **disarmament and the removal of Hamas from power**. It would also provide a third, long-term objective: **preventing the Movement from rebuilding an armed military entity in Gaza**.

In internal Palestinian discussions, Hamas acknowledges that armed struggle in Gaza has, at this stage, reached its endpoint, and that no one in the Strip is likely to consider rebuilding a military base in the coming decades.

In the long term, however, the matter will depend on developments. These could include the conclusion of a peace agreement that completely ends the conflict, or the continued occupation of Palestinian territory, which could push future generations — and future political forces — to return to armed struggle. Alternatively, different political forces may eventually conclude that this form of national struggle is ineffective and replace it with other, less costly forms of resistance, particularly after the enormous and unprecedented number of Palestinian casualties in this war, which has reached tens of thousands.

It is well known that people living under foreign occupation, suffering from the confiscation of their human and national rights and their freedom, will continue searching for a way to free themselves from that occupation. People frequently change the methods and tools of their struggle according to changing circumstances and realities.

Israel Rejects the Agreement

The Israeli government rejected the agreement, declaring that it would not withdraw from any area of the Strip before complete disarmament. Behind the scenes, however, negotiations are underway with Israel to persuade it to accept what the American side has already accepted: The disarmament process will take place gradually, and Hamas will be unable to backtrack or maneuver because an independent verification committee will be present. If Hamas does attempt to do so, it will bear the consequences before the people of Gaza, the majority of whom are living in tents that do not protect them from the summer heat or winter cold, and who are deprived of even the most basic humanitarian services.

Many assessments suggest that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu does not want to accept an agreement involving images of Israeli military withdrawals from Gaza during the decisive election

period, for which campaigns have already begun and have focused on the responsibility for the heavy Israeli losses during Hamas's October 7 attack.

Therefore, mediators and those involved in the negotiating process acknowledge that the chances of implementing the agreement before the Israeli elections are slim. However, **those chances could increase significantly after the elections and the formation of the next government.**

The American Side

The American side views the agreement as a historic achievement, as Trump described it, particularly because it comes in a region where the administration has not achieved major successes, especially in its joint war with Israel against Iran.

The administration sees the establishment of a new government for the Gaza Strip, operating under its supervision and direction, as an experiment worthy of significant attention and investment. Ultimately, it believes this process could end the military presence of Hamas and the other factions in Gaza and establish an urban, economic, security, and educational system that could serve as a model for similar experiments in other areas, perhaps including Lebanon, Yemen, and elsewhere.

Challenges and Scenarios

Challenges

The new agreement faces a number of challenges, including the possibility of Israeli Government insisting on **keeping the Israeli forces in Gaza** for various reasons, arguing that Hamas must first completely disarm.

Another challenge is the **possibility of dissent amongst pockets within Hamas** and the other factions rebelling and refusing to hand over their weapons, although all the factions have agreed to the agreement, particularly Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front, the Democratic Front, and the Popular Resistance Committees.

There is also the possibility of disputes between the factions and NCAG over the committee's powers, **particularly the authority of the new police force**. The police could potentially detain members of these factions for various reasons, such as carrying weapons, tribal disputes, personal vendettas, and other matters.

Another potential challenge is **a conflict of authority between the Palestinian Authority and NCAG**, which operates a civilian apparatus in the Gaza Strip comprising thousands of employees, particularly in health, education, telecommunications, social services, and other sectors.

Another issue is the question of the **timing of holding general elections for the Legislative Council in Gaza**, something that the Board of Peace may oppose, given that it has received a mandate from the UN Security Council to administer the Gaza Strip for two years, a mandate that could potentially be extended.

There is also the possibility of a **conflict erupting between the Palestinian factions and NCAG over the reconstruction plan**, which remains unclear at this stage. There is the old Jared Kushner plan, which calls for changing Gaza's urban and living environment, transforming parts of the Strip's coastline into tourist destinations, and changing its educational, economic, financial, and lifestyle systems.

There is broad agreement among the factions to reject the Kushner plan because they believe it entails re-engineering the Palestinian presence in the Gaza Strip — educationally, economically, architecturally, and culturally — in ways that conflict with the current lifestyle and prevailing conservative culture.

Another challenge is the **lack of funds necessary for reconstruction** or for providing employees with their financial entitlements, particularly given that the reconstruction needs of the Gaza Strip amount to tens of billions of dollars. There are concerns that social and political unrest could emerge in Gaza if reconstruction stalls or former employees do not receive their financial entitlements.

Scenarios

1. **The successful implementation of the agreement is a realistic and optimistic scenario.**
Under this scenario, NCAG will enter Gaza alongside the deployment of the ISF (International Stabilization Forces), take possession of the weapons from Hamas and the other factions, and deploy police forces throughout the Strip, area by area, following the withdrawal of the Israeli army from each area. This scenario has several factors working in its favor, the most important being the support it receives from the U.S. administration and the upcoming elections in Israel. Another factor contributing to its success is that it achieves Israel's objective of disarmament and removing Hamas from power, while bringing an end to any activity by Hamas and the other factions aimed at rebuilding a new military infrastructure in Gaza. At the same time, this scenario would give Hamas an important return for surrendering its weapons: an Israeli withdrawal from the entire Gaza Strip, except for certain buffer areas along the borders, as well as a solution to the financial situation of tens of thousands of its employees working in the civilian and police apparatuses, most of whom are expected to be offered early retirement.
2. The second, **less optimistic scenario is the partial implementation of the agreement**, involving disarmament and an Israeli withdrawal, followed by a halt to subsequent stages of reconstruction because of a lack of funding. Israeli military operations could then resume under the pretext of eliminating cells attempting to rebuild an armed force in the Strip.
Hamas could attempt to rebuild itself as an organized political movement with a clandestine security apparatus, similar to the apparatus the Movement had during the First Intifada under Israeli occupation. That apparatus carried out covert assassinations of people accused of collaborating with Israel, as well as actions against political opponents whom the Movement claimed were connected to Israel or Western parties.
3. The third scenario would involve **Hamas attempting to replicate Hezbollah's experience in Lebanon** by establishing a pressure force against NCAG, seeking to compel it either to take

or refrain from taking certain steps. These could include pressure to change governance and reconstruction plans, police measures, and other policies. Hamas could rely on its strength as an organized movement with tens of thousands of highly committed members driven by ideological motivations.

Finally, the fate of the agreement depends on the degree of cooperation among the parties and the intentions of the main actors in implementing the agreement. If any of the three principal actors — Israel, Hamas, or the U.S. administration, together with the Peace Council and the technocratic committee — violates any of the agreement’s conditions, this could lead to its temporary or permanent suspension and potentially to its failure and collapse. Many assessments indicate that Hamas has an interest in implementing the agreement, despite the weakening effect that surrendering its weapons would have on the Movement. A recent poll by Khalil Shikaki showed that the majority of Palestinians support negotiation and oppose the military activities to achieve Palestinian national rights. **Hamas’s primary objectives would be to end the war, allow the people of Gaza to recover, and prepare the Movement to play a future political role based on a substantial legacy of sacrifice.**

It may also be in the interests of the other parties to implement the agreement because it would lead the Gaza Strip and Hamas into a new phase centered on political activity and a complete break with armed struggle, out of fear that war, killing, and destruction could once again return to a territory that has lost more than 73,000 of its people and whose residents endured the horrors of a prolonged war without any means of personal protection or food security.

