



By: *Sharmila Devi*

US and Israel still thinking about forcibly displacing Palestinians to Africa



Mass rapes and other atrocities led the US to **describe** the situation in Sudan as genocide in January. Now the Trump administration and Israel think the country is a good home for Palestinians.

The mass “transfer” of Palestinians has long been touted by right-wing Israeli nationalists as its preferred route to peace. But the idea now being floated by US and Israeli officials of displacing Palestinians from Gaza to Sudan, Syria, Somalia and Somaliland seems a new level of callousness.

Proponents of the “ethnic cleansing” plan seem to be relying on the world’s neglect of the brutal wars in Africa and their accompanying suffering, which is borne overwhelmingly by civilians in active-conflict zones that also include Yemen and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Renewed violence threatens to erupt in South Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Resumed Israeli **attacks** on Gaza this week overshadowed the US and Israeli outreach over the possible removal of Palestinians.

Sudanese officials have rejected the US request to discuss the issue, while Syria, Somalia and Somaliland have so far said they are unaware of the US offer.

But the idea has been discussed with great interest in Israeli media. Unsurprisingly, Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli prime minister, has promised to implement the plan, calling it “revolutionary” and “bold.”

Israel’s defence ministry has set up a **directorate** to encourage the “voluntary emigration” of Gazans, but it has yet to find a country willing to take them.

Sudan rivals Gaza in terms of destruction

Trump outlined a vision of Gaza as a “Riviera of the Middle East” on 4 February. His idea appears to be straight out of the playbook of

Israel’s Kach party, the far-right movement which in the 1970s advocated the transfer of the Arab population from Israel.

Its inspiration was the population exchange of more than 1.6 million people conducted by Greece and Turkey as part of the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne peace settlement.

Deep aid cuts by the US and other Western countries add to sharp questions about the morality of the Palestinian displacement discussion

But facts on the ground in the Horn of Africa, specifically the instability and uncertainty created by warring parties, pose concrete problems, while deep aid cuts by the US and other Western countries add to sharp questions about the morality of the Palestinian displacement discussion.

Sudan rivals Gaza in terms of destruction. Just this week, reporters described the “stench of death” as Red Crescent workers **pulled** shot-riddled bodies with crushed heads out of a sewage pit in Sudan’s capital, Khartoum.

The US removed Sudan from its list of state supporters of terrorism after Khartoum joined the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Morocco in the 2020 Abraham Accord that normalised diplomatic relations with Israel.

Widespread war crimes

But two years ago next month, war broke out between Sudan’s government led by army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and his former deputy and commander of the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, Mohamed Hamdan Daglo.

Tens of thousands of people have died, more than 12 million people uprooted, and 3.5 million have fled the country. The International Criminal Court is investigating widespread war crimes and crimes against

humanity.

Somalia fares little better as a possible new home

US incentives reportedly offered to Sudan in exchange for taking in Palestinians include helping the Sudanese army to fight the RSF.

Somalia fares little better as a possible new home. The Islamist Al-Shabaab group rules much of the country. As for the breakaway state of Somaliland, which is more peaceful but is unrecognised internationally, the US is reportedly thinking about recognising the de facto state in return for a military base near the Red Sea port of Berbera.

“Alternatives and options that lead to a better life for Gazans”

A little more attention has been paid to Yemen in the last week, but only because of fresh US military strikes against the Iran-backed Houthis. The US has threatened “overwhelming lethal force” against the Houthis, but this is unlikely to deter them from disrupting international shipping in the Red Sea.

The DRC - where at least 7,000 people have died since January in a war with the rebel M23 group - is reportedly holding “daily exchanges” with the US over a Ukraine-inspired minerals-for-security deal.



Washington is exploring all alternatives and options that lead to a better life for Gazans - Steve Witkoff

While the US would likely be unwilling to put troops on the ground, it is hard to imagine any US supply of military equipment to the DRC adding to the chance of a durable peace among the myriad of armed groups involved in military clashes and mineral smuggling.

Meanwhile, attacks have risen in South Sudan and observers fear the collapse of a peace deal reached by the government and opposition seven years ago. And tensions are rising between Ethiopia and Eritrea, with Ethiopian troops moving towards the border and Eritrean troops under a nationwide mobilisation.

Into this African mix has come Steve Witkoff, the US envoy for the Middle East who has also been busy conveying Trump’s wishes to Moscow over a Ukraine ceasefire. He **told** US television that Washington was exploring “all alternatives and options that lead to a better life for Gazans”.