



By: TA | AP Insight

What do governments get for a 1 billion ticket to Gaza's Board of Peace?



The European Union's executive arm, Russia, Belarus and Thailand on Monday were the latest to be asked to join U.S. President Donald Trump's new **Board of Peace** that will supervise the next phase of the **Gaza peace plan**, while France is holding off accepting for now.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russian President Vladimir Putin received the invitation and that the Kremlin is now "studying the details" and would seek clarity of "all the nuances" in contacts with the U.S.

It's unclear how many leaders have been invited to join the board. But a Trump reference in the invitation letters that the body would "embark on a bold new approach to resolving global conflict" suggested it could act as a rival to the U.N. Security Council, the most powerful body of the **global organization** created in the wake of World War II.

France does not plan to join the Board of Peace "at this stage" despite receiving an invitation, a French official close to President Emmanuel Macron said Monday.

The issue is raising questions, particularly with regard to respect for the principles and structure of the United Nations, said the official, speaking anonymously in line with the French presidency's customary practices.

A top Israeli official said the initiative is "bad for Israel" and should be scrapped.

Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko has been invited and is ready to take part, according to the country's Foreign Ministry.

The Thai Foreign Ministry said it was also invited and that it was reviewing the details.

European Commission spokesperson Olof Gill confirmed that Ursula von der Leyen, the president of the commission, received an invitation and would be speaking to other EU leaders about Gaza.

Gill didn't say whether the invitation had been accepted, but that the commission wants "to

contribute to a comprehensive plan to end the Gaza conflict."

According to the World Bank's Gaza and West Bank Interim Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (IRDNA) report released last year, it'll take \$53 billion to rebuild the strip.

Israel's objections to the board

Israeli far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich on Monday dismissed the Board of Peace as a raw deal for Israel and called for its dissolution.

"It is time to explain to the president that his plan is bad for the State of Israel and to cancel it," Smotrich said. "Gaza is ours, its future will affect our future more than anyone else's. We will take responsibility for what happens there, impose military administration, and complete the mission."

Smotrich, a hard-liner who opposed the Gaza ceasefire, even suggested that Israel renew a full-scale offensive on the territory to destroy Hamas if it doesn't abide by a "short ultimatum for real disarmament and exile."

There will not be Turkish soldiers and Qatari soldiers in the Gaza Strip - Benjamin Netanyahu

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said later on Monday that while there are differences with the U.S. about the composition of the advisory committee accompanying the next phase in Gaza, it would not harm his relationship with Trump.

"There will not be Turkish soldiers and Qatari soldiers in the (Gaza) Strip," he said.

Netanyahu's office earlier said the formation of an executive board that will work to carry out the vision of the Board of Peace wasn't coordinated with the Israeli government and "is contrary to its policy" without clarifying its objections.

Israel hasn't been invited to join the committee, unlike Turkey, a key regional rival.

The final list

The U.S. is expected to announce its official list of members in the coming days, likely during the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos, Switzerland.

Board members will oversee an **executive committee** that will be in charge of implementing the tough **second phase** of the Gaza peace plan that includes the deployment of an international security force, **disarmament of Hamas** and reconstruction of the war-devastated territory.

Keir Starmer said the United Kingdom is talking to allies about the Board of Peace

A \$1 billion contribution secures permanent membership on the board, with the money going to rebuild Gaza, according to a U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity about the charter as he wasn't permitted to speak publicly about details of the board, which hasn't been made public. A three-year appointment has no contribution requirement.

Details of how this will also work remain murky. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said Monday the United Kingdom is talking to allies about the Board of Peace.

Although the U.K. hasn't said whether Starmer has been formally invited to join, he said it's necessary to proceed with the Gaza peace plan's second phase and that his country has "indicated willingness to play our part, and we will."

Running Gaza

Egypt's top diplomat on Monday met with the leader of the newly appointed committee of Palestinian technocrats who will be running

Gaza's day-to-day affairs during the second phase of the peace plan.

Foreign Minister Bader Abdelatty met with Ali Shaath, a Palestinian engineer and former official with the Western-backed Palestinian Authority, who was named last week as chief commissioner of the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza.

Abdelatty expressed the Egyptian government's "complete support" of the committee and affirmed its role in running Gaza's daily affairs until the Palestinian Authority takes over the territory, said a statement from the Egyptian ministry.

He also underscored "the importance of preserving the unity of the Palestinian territories, ensuring geographical and administrative continuity between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank."

Gaza humanitarian situation still fragile

The U.N. World Food Program on Monday said it has "significantly expanded" its operations across Gaza 100 days into the ceasefire, reaching more than a million people each month with hot meals and food parcels.



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But it warned the situation remains "extremely fragile."

It noted that malnutrition has been prevented for 200,000 pregnant and breastfeeding women, as well as children under 5.

Still, the most recent Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis in December indicated that 77% the population is facing crisis-level food insecurity.

Israeli forces move into Hebron

Israeli military and security forces launched what they called a large-scale counterterrorism operation in the West Bank city of Hebron to dismantle "terrorist infrastructure, eliminating illegal weapons possession and strengthening security."

The Israeli military said Monday the operation is expected to continue for several days. Israeli armored vehicles and soldiers patrolled city streets and put up barriers where operations were being conducted.

Hebron Mayor Khaled Dudin said Israeli forces targeted the area that's home to 80,000 people because it obstructs the construction of additional Israeli settlements.

The West Bank has seen a surge in Israeli military activity since the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas-led attack into Israel that triggered the war in Gaza.