

*Transcript of Donald Trump's
joint news conference with
Benjamin Netanyahu / Tuesday,
February 4, 2025 *** The White
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U.S. President Donald Trump has said the United States will “take over” and “own” Gaza after an ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from the besieged enclave under an extraordinary plan that he claimed could turn the enclave into “the Riviera of the Middle East.”

Hamas, the Palestinian group that governs Gaza, swiftly condemned the proposal as a “recipe for creating chaos and tension in the region.”

Trump’s statement on his Gaza plans came while he was addressing a news conference at the White House with Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Here's the transcript of Trump's statements:

"Today I'm delighted to welcome Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu back to the White House. It's a wonderful feeling and a wonderful event. We had fantastic talks, and thank you very much, with your staff.

"I want to say it's an honour to have you with us. Over the past four years, the US and the Israeli alliance has been tested more than any time in history, but the bonds of friendship and affection between the American and Israeli people have endured for generations and they are absolutely unbreakable.

"I'm confident that, under our leadership, the cherished alliance between our two countries will soon be stronger than ever. We had a great relationship. We had great victories together four years ago, not so many victories over the past four years, however. In my first term, prime minister and I forged a tremendously successful partnership that brought peace and stability to the Middle East like it hadn't seen in decades.

"Together, we defeated ISIS [ISIL], we ended the disastrous Iran nuclear deal, one of the worst deals ever made, and imposed the toughest ever sanctions on the Iranian regime. We starved Hamas and Iran's other terrorist proxies, and we starved them like they had never seen before, resources and support disappeared for them.

"I recognized Israel's capital, opened the American embassy in Jerusalem and got it built. We got it built. It's beautiful, all Jerusalem stone right from nearby and it was – it's something that's very special.

"And recognized Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, something that they talked about for 70 years and they weren't able to get it. And I got it. And with the historic Abraham Accords, something that was really an achievement that was, I think, going to become more and more important because we achieved the most significant Middle East peace agreements in half a century.

"And I really believe that many countries will soon be joining this amazing peace and economic development transaction. It really is a big economic development transaction. I think we're going to have a lot of people signing up very quickly. Unfortunately, for four years, nobody signed up. Nobody did anything for four years except in the negative.

"Unfortunately, the weakness and incompetence of those past four years, the grave damage around the globe that was done, including in the Middle East, grave damage all over the globe. The horrors of October 7th would never have happened if I were president. The Ukraine and Russia disaster would never have happened if I were president.

"Over the past 16 months, Israel has endured a sustained aggressive and murderous assault on every front, but they fought back bravely. You see that and you know that. What we have witnessed is an all-out attack on the very existence of a Jewish state in the Jewish homeland. The Israelis have stood strong and united in the face of an enemy that has kidnapped, tortured, raped and slaughtered innocent men, women, children and even little babies.

"I want to salute the Israeli people for meeting this trial with courage and determination and unflinching resolve. They have been strong. In our meetings today, the prime minister and I focused on the future, discussing how we can work together to ensure Hamas is eliminated and ultimately restore peace to a very troubled region.

"It's been troubled, but what has happened in the last four years has not been good.

"I also strongly believe that the Gaza Strip, which has been a symbol of death and destruction for so many decades and so bad for the people anywhere near it, and especially those who live there and frankly

who's been really very unlucky. It's been very unlucky. It's been an unlucky place for a long time.

"Being in its presence just has not been good and it should not go through a process of rebuilding and occupation by the same people that have really stood there and fought for it and lived there and died there and lived a miserable existence there. Instead, we should go to other countries of interest with humanitarian hearts, and there are many of them that want to do this and build various domains that will ultimately be occupied by the 1.8 million Palestinians living in Gaza, ending the death and destruction and frankly bad luck.

"This can be paid for by neighbouring countries of great wealth. It could be one, two, three, four, five, seven, eight, 12. It could be numerous sites, or it could be one large site. But the people will be able to live in comfort and peace and we'll make sure something really spectacular is done.

"They're going to have peace. They're not going to be shot at and killed and destroyed like this civilisation of wonderful people has had to endure. The only reason the Palestinians want to go back to Gaza is they have no alternative. It's right now a demolition site. This is just a demolition site. Virtually every building is down.

"They're living under fallen concrete that's very dangerous and very precarious. They instead can occupy all of a beautiful area with homes and safety and they can live out their lives in peace and harmony instead of having to go back and do it again.

"The U.S. will take over the Gaza Strip and we will do a job with it too. We'll own it and be responsible for dismantling all of the dangerous unexploded bombs and other weapons on the site, level the site and get rid of the destroyed buildings, level it out. Create an economic development that will supply unlimited numbers of jobs and housing for the people of the area ... Do a real job, do something different.

"Just can't go back. If you go back, it's going to end up the same way it has for 100 years. I'm hopeful that this ceasefire could be the beginning of a larger and more enduring peace that will end the bloodshed and killing once and for all. With the same goal in mind, my administration has been moving quickly to restore trust in the alliance and rebuild American strength throughout the region and we've really done that.

"I ended the last administration's de facto arms embargo on over \$1 billion, in military assistance for Israel. And I'm also pleased to announce that this afternoon, the United States withdrew from the anti-Semitic UN Human Rights Council and ended all of the support for the UN Relief and Works Agency, which funnelled money to Hamas, and which was very disloyal to humanity."

[SOURCE: AL JAZEERA and NEWS AGENCIES]

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