

Arab leaders endorse Egypt's Gaza reconstruction plan

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The Arab League held an extraordinary summit in Cairo on March 4, 2025, attended by several heads of state, foreign ministers, and other high-level representatives.

Cairo, March 4 (RHC)-- Arab leaders have endorsed an Egyptian plan for the reconstruction of war-shattered Gaza that would allow its residents to remain in the territory, Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-

Sisi has said.

At the meeting in Cairo on Tuesday, the regional leaders endorsed the counterproposal to U.S. President Donald Trump's plan to expel Gaza's 2.3 million residents and redevelop the Palestinian territory.

The attendees at the summit included the emir of Qatar, the vice president of the United Arab Emirates and the foreign minister of Saudi Arabia. United Nations Secretary-General Antonios Guterres also attended.

Egypt's plan includes an initial recovery phase aimed at de-mining the territory and providing temporary housing, followed by a longer reconstruction phase focused on rebuilding essential infrastructure, according to media reports.

Other key questions about Gaza's future include who will govern the enclave and which countries will provide the billions of dollars needed for the reconstruction of the devastated territory.

El-Sisi said Egypt had worked in cooperation with Palestinians on creating an administrative committee of independent, professional Palestinian technocrats entrusted with the governance of Gaza.

The committee would be responsible for the oversight of humanitarian aid and managing the Gaza Strip's affairs for a temporary period, in preparation for the return of the Palestinian Authority (PA), he said.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who heads the PA, said he welcomed the Egyptian idea and urged Trump to support such a plan that would not involve displacing Palestinian residents.

Abbas, in power since 2005, also said he was ready to hold presidential and parliamentary elections if circumstances allowed, adding his PA was the only legitimate governing and military force in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Hamas has said it rejects any solution imposed on the Gaza Strip by outsiders.

"We look forward to an effective Arab role that ends the humanitarian tragedy created by the occupation in the Gaza Strip ... and thwarts the [Israeli] occupation's plans to displace [Palestinians]," the group said in a statement on Tuesday.

Any proposal would require heavy buy-in from oil-rich Gulf Arab states such as the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, which have the billions of dollars needed to roll out the plan.

The extraordinary summit comes days after the first phase of the Israel-Hamas ceasefire in Gaza expired. Israel reneged on the terms of the deal by refusing to embark on phase two negotiations, instead pushing for an extension of the first phase of the deal.

Israel announced on Sunday that it would halt the entry of humanitarian aid and other supplies into Gaza and introduced a new ceasefire proposal that it said was backed by the United States.

During the 42 days of the first phase, 25 living captives and the remains of eight dead captives were returned to Israel in exchange for some 2,000 Palestinian prisoners and detainees.

All remaining living captives were due to be freed in a second phase of the ceasefire, but Hamas and Israel are deadlocked over how to extend the truce.

Under the new Israeli proposal, Hamas would be required to release half its remaining captives in exchange for a ceasefire extension and a promise to negotiate a lasting truce. Israel made no mention of releasing more Palestinian prisoners – a key component of the first phase.

Hamas has accused Israel of trying to sabotage the existing agreement, which called for the two sides to negotiate the return of the remaining captives in exchange for more Palestinian prisoners, a full Israeli

withdrawal from Gaza and a lasting ceasefire. But no substantive negotiations have been held.

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