

AL-HAQ TRUMP TRILOGY

PART II

The 'GREAT Trust' –
A US-Israeli Annexationist
Plan for Gaza



AL-HAQ

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I. INTRODUCTION

In January 2025, the United States (US) President, Donald Trump, said in reference to Gaza: “You’re talking about a million and half people ... we just clean out the whole thing”.¹ In another noticeable statement hinting at his will to forcibly displace Palestinians from the Gaza Strip, President Trump simply claimed that “Jordan and Egypt should take in Palestinians from war-ravaged Gaza.”²

This complete disregard of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination was followed on 4 February 2025 by Trump further stating: “The US will take over the Gaza Strip and we will do a job with it too” by turning it into the “Riviera of the Middle East” after relocating Palestinians to other countries.³ Alongside Israel’s Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, he went on to explain “[w]e’ll own it...do what is necessary”, describing Gaza as a “demolition site” that “should not go through a process of rebuilding” — instead claiming that Palestinians would not want to return to Gaza because “[t]hat place has been hell...nobody can live there” and that Gaza is somewhere “they have experienced nothing but death and destruction”.⁴ President Trump

1 “Trump suggests his plan for Gaza Strip is to ‘clean out the whole thing’” CNN (26 January 2025), <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/01/25/politics/trump-gaza-strip-jordan-egypt>

2 “Jordan and Egypt push back at Trump’s proposal that they should take in Gazans” *The Arab Weekly* (27 January 2025), <https://the arabweekly.com/jordan-and-egypt-push-back-trumps-proposal-they-should-take-gazans>

3 “Trump says Israel will hand over Gaza to US after fighting ends” BBC (6 February 2025), <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4g9xgj2429o>

4 See Al-Haq, “Trump’s Annexationist Plan for Mass Expulsion of Palestinians from Gaza Continues Israeli-U.S. Genocide” (5 February 2025), <https://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/25880.html>

conveniently failed to add who was responsible for said death and destruction.

Building on these remarks, on 27 August 2025, the White House held a meeting on “how to end the war”, with anonymous sources saying that the US administration had a “very comprehensive plan”.⁵ The ‘Gaza Reconstitution, Economic Acceleration and Transformation’ (GREAT) Trust is one of the proposals discussed by the US administration and international partners, modelled in his vow to “take over” Gaza.⁶ The GREAT Trust offers “generous voluntary relocation packages” for Palestinians in Gaza,⁷ and states that the territory “would turn into a trusteeship administered by the US for at least 10 years while it is transformed into a gleaming tourism resort and high-tech manufacturing and technology hub.”⁸ The Washington Post reported that major elements of the GREAT Trust were “specifically designed to make real the President’s vision of a “Riviera of the Middle East”.⁹ Needless to say, the meeting did not invite any Palestinian representative. Rather, the plan has “been concocted by consulting firms eager to cash in on outside money, with little knowledge of the region or the Gaza Strip, no local buy-in, and no regard to the interests or views of the people of Gaza”.¹⁰ Israel’s Zionist goals were clearly incorporated in the drafting of the proposal, which was developed by

5 “Gaza postwar plan envisions ‘voluntary’ relocation of entire population” *The Washington Post* (2 September 2025), <https://archive.fo/G2nqd#selection-279.0-279.71>

6 “The GREAT Trust From a Demolished Iranian Proxy to a Prosperous Abrahamic Ally”, (27 August 2025) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/documents/f86dd56a-de7f-4943-af4a-84819111b727.pdf>

7 The GREAT Trust, p. 2.

8 “Gaza postwar plan envisions ‘voluntary’ relocation of entire population” *The Washington Post* (2 September 2025), <https://archive.fo/G2nqd#selection-279.0-279.71>

9 *Ibid.*

10 “The GREAT Trust for Gaza: A Blueprint for Dispossession, Not Reconstruction” Arab Centre Washington DC (4 September 2025), <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/the-great-trust-for-gaza-a-blueprint-for-dispossession-not-reconstruction/>

some of the same Israelis who created and set in motion the US, Israel-backed, Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF).¹¹ In a declared state of famine,¹² the GHF weaponises critically needed aid and functions as a tool in Israel's genocide against Palestinians in Gaza by luring the starving population to distribution sites where they are directly fired upon and killed. Since 27 May, when the GHF began operating in the Gaza Strip, over 2,500 Palestinians have been killed and more than 18,900 injured trying to access aid supplies.¹³

The GREAT Trust must be examined in the broader context of Israel's genocidal settler-colonial, apartheid regime and aim of resettling the Gaza Strip. This annexationist goal is fully supported by the US's profit-driven administration, which stands to capitalise on the exploitation and redevelopment of Gaza.

11 "Gaza postwar plan envisions 'voluntary' relocation of entire population" *The Washington Post* (2 September 2025), <https://archive.fo/G2nqd#selection-279.0-279.71>

12 UN News, 'The descent into 'a massive famine' in Gaza has begun, relief agencies warn' (29 August 2025) <<https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/08/1165741>>

13 UN OCHA, 'Humanitarian Situation Update #327 | Gaza Strip' (2 October 2025) <<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-327-gaza-strip>>

II. THE 'GREAT TRUST'

i. Entrenching Israel's unlawful occupation

The GREAT Trust depicts Gaza as an Iranian “proxy”¹⁴ or “outpost”,¹⁵ referring to the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas, in an attempt to categorise Gaza as a terrorist stronghold rather than an unlawfully occupied territory under Israeli blockade for over 18 years. Israel's complete control over Gaza, including its airspace, land crossings, and maritime zone has crippled Gaza's economy. However, the GREAT Trust blames Gaza's “long-term contraction, poverty, and extreme aid dependency” solely on Hamas's role in governance.¹⁶ The complete dismissal of the true root causes of Gaza's economic insecurity leads on to the claim that economic recovery merely “depends on dismantling Hamas and reintegrating it into the region”.¹⁷ Rather than respecting, and upholding, Palestine's sovereignty and the inalienable right of its people to full self-determination — which at its core includes the ability to freely determine and pursue its own governance — the GREAT Trust provides for a multilateral trusteeship evolving from the US taking control of Gaza from Israel on the basis of a US-Israel bilateral agreement.¹⁸ According to the plan for the GREAT Trust, after

14 The GREAT Trust, p. 1

15 The GREAT Trust, p. 3

16 The GREAT Trust, p. 4

17 The GREAT Trust, p. 4

18 The GREAT Trust, p. 2

Hamas is dismantled (or voluntarily disarms) Israel will maintain “overarching rights to meet its security needs”. Administrative authority and responsibilities would be transferred to the GREAT Trust under the aforementioned US-Israel bilateral agreement. After a year or so, when the transfer is complete, the Trust (which seeks investment from Arab and other nations) will govern Gaza “for a transition period until a reformed and deradicalized Palestinian Polity is ready to step in its shoes”.¹⁹ However, the very same page notes that the Trust’s authority could be expanded to a formal trusteeship – hinting at the intended outcome of maintaining permanent control over the Palestinian territory. The envisioned “End State” is reached once Gaza is “demilitarised and deradicalised” and only at this point will the Trust “transfer authorities to an independent Palestinian Polity” — rather than the State of Palestine, as recognised by over 80 percent of the UN General Assembly.

Beyond being refused statehood, the GREAT Trust foresees protections remaining in place “to secure the Trust’s assets and ensure long-term stability”, and a precondition to the transfer of authority from the Trust to a Palestinian Polity is Israel’s agreement to long-term security arrangements.²⁰ The trusteeship envisaged ends with the “reformed Palestinian Polity”, joining “the Abraham Accords.”²¹ It is worth noting the wording of this last step, “will join”, which means that Gaza’s governing authority will be bound to sign normalisation accords with Israel.

19 The GREAT Trust, p. 10

20 The GREAT Trust, p. 10-11

21 The GREAT Trust, p. 10

As the wording of the plan states, and as history would confirm, there will be a permanent foreign and Israeli presence in Gaza. The extent of sociopolitical and economic development Gaza and its people may enjoy will continue to be dictated by a colonial, imperialist power whose involvement in and control over the territory is motivated purely by financial interests and a geopolitical agenda that seeks to profit from the most vulnerable groups in society.

Unsurprisingly, the GREAT Trust does not provide any accountability measures for the plethora of international crimes and ongoing genocidal acts Israel is currently committing against Palestinians in Gaza. It does not even allude to the reasons as to why Gaza requires a complete reconstruction. Equally the criminal responsibility of the US, Israel's partner, enabler and main funder — as well as the drafter of the GREAT Trust — is omitted entirely. Instead of requiring Israel and its allies to fund the reconstruction of Gaza, as an integral component of the Palestinian State, as partial reparation for their shared responsibility and complicity in its wholesale destruction, the GREAT Trust outlines an “innovative funding model” based on “land trust and tokenization” that will only cement foreign presence and interference in the unlawfully occupied Palestinian territory.

At the time of writing, officially two years into Israel's vicious genocidal campaign, thousands of Palestinian men, women and children remain buried under the vast landscape of rubble. However, instead of being a plan for the “reconstitution, economic acceleration, and transformation” of the Gaza Strip, the GREAT Trust is better described as a “fraudulent scheme designed to shield Israel from the consequences of its criminal and disastrous policies over the

past 23 months, which have trapped it in the most perilous existential crisis of its 77-year-long history.”²²

ii. The “voluntary” relocation of Palestinians

Reneging on the idea of forcibly expelling Gaza’s entire population, announced alongside Netanyahu in January 2025, Trump’s GREAT Trust now provides Palestinians in Gaza — where 92 percent of housing units have been destroyed or damaged —²³ with two options. The first option is “generous voluntary relocation packages” to incentivise the displacement of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip.²⁴ Each Palestinian that chooses to relocate would have to leave Gaza, and in exchange would receive 5,000 US dollars; rent subsidised for four years, and food subsidised for the first year.²⁵ The plan assumes that 25 percent of Palestinians in Gaza would choose to leave, and 75 percent of this group would choose not to return. No further information is provided on how these estimates were determined, but suffice to say that Palestinians were not included in the development of the GREAT Trust.

22 “The GREAT Trust for Gaza: A Blueprint for Dispossession, Not Reconstruction” Arab Centre Washington DC (4 September 2025), <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/the-great-trust-for-gaza-a-blueprint-for-dispossession-not-reconstruction/>

23 UN OCHA, ‘Reported impact snapshot | Gaza Strip (1 October 2025)’ (2 October 2025) <<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-1-october-2025>>

24 The GREAT Trust, p. 1

25 The GREAT Trust, p. 15

The second option available to Palestinians in Gaza is staying in “temporary housing zones”.²⁶ The proposed temporary housing is described as “hardened structures set up in communities with life support (e.g., education, WASH, food)”.²⁷ Crucial to note is the GREAT Trust’s decision to entrust the GHF, which is to coordinate with the IOF, with the critical role of providing “ Hamas-free secure aid” and building and operating these “temporary housing zones”, while “[p]rivate contractors and vetted Gazans maintain public order”.²⁸ As the last six months have shown, the GHF has only further advanced Israel’s genocidal campaign in the Gaza Strip by weaponizing life-saving aid and using it as a tool to funnel forcibly displaced Palestinians to strategically beneficial areas for the Israeli military, where they remain subject to bombardment and the threat of constant attack. GHF sites themselves have functioned as killing fields for starving, exhausted Palestinians — mostly men and boys — who have no choice but to risk their life for a meal or two. As noted above, more than 20,000 Palestinians have been killed or injured at aid “distribution sites” since the GHF began operations in late May 2025.²⁹ Trusting the partial, politically-motivated GHF — created by Israel in February 2025, with US support and including US contractors — rather than an independent, impartial and unbiased UN agency to feed and assist a population whose destruction it is currently actively supporting and contributing to is highly disturbing, and disregards the core

26 The GREAT Trust, p. 4, 15

27 The GREAT Trust, p. 15

28 The GREAT Trust, p. 10-11

29 UN OCHA, ‘Humanitarian Situation Update #327 | Gaza Strip’ (2 October 2025) <<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-327-gaza-strip>>

principles of international humanitarian law (IHL).³⁰

The GREAT Trust expressly highlights the financial benefit to Palestinians in Gaza “relocating” to a different country, noting that 23,000 US dollars is saved when a single Palestinian leaves. A staggering 500 million US dollars is allegedly saved if just one percent of Gaza’s population leaves the Palestinian territory.³¹ Moreover, on page 17 titled “Levers to Reduce the Trust’s Investment”, it explicitly lists increasing “the number of Gazans who volunteer to leave Gaza during the reconstruction”.³² With claims of such substantial (alleged) savings, the illusion of choice becomes manifestly clear — their mass deportation will gradually be carried out through the creation of unsustainable and unliveable conditions. Tellingly, the map included in the plan for the GREAT Trust does not even mention the temporary housing units where Palestinians wishing to stay in Gaza would be hosted. Rather, the map allocates all of Gaza’s land to construction projects, including the “Elon Musk Smart Manufacturing Zone”, the “Regional Water Hub” and “Gaza Planned Cities”.³³ Further, an “MBS ring” inside Gaza suggests “the expropriation [of Palestinian property] for an Israeli security buffer zone of much of Gaza’s agricultural land, which tends to be located at Gaza’s periphery close to the border with Israel.”³⁴

30 See UN OHCHR, ‘UN experts call for immediate dismantling of Gaza Humanitarian Foundation’ (5 August 2025) <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/08/un-experts-call-immediate-dismantling-gaza-humanitarian-foundation>>

31 The GREAT Trust, p. 15

32 The GREAT Trust, p. 17

33 The GREAT Trust, p. 6

34 “Leaked ‘Gaza Riviera’ plan dismissed as ‘insane’ attempt to cover ethnic cleansing” *The Guardian* (1 September 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/sep/01/leaked-gaza-riviera-plan-dismissed-as-insane-attempt-to-cover-ethnic-cleansing>

iii. Dramatic change of Gaza

The Great Trust, in “reimagining Gaza”,³⁵ clearly envisions redeveloping the Palestinian territory to be a commercial hub and high-tech resort, the sole aim of which is to generate revenue for public and private stakeholders. This is inferred from, inter alia, the “\$320B ‘Asset Value’ by Year 10” that “will create significant value for all involved stakeholders”³⁶ which is sure to include former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, designated to be governor of the Gaza Strip under Trump’s subsequent 20-point plan,³⁷ and former Trump Middle East envoy Jared Kushner, Trump’s son-in-law and a business and real-estate investor, who both attended the abovementioned White House meeting on 27 August 2025.

The new Gaza imagined by the GREAT Trust would be composed of “6-8 dynamic, modern and AI-powered, smart planned cities on the inner side of the Gaza Ring”.³⁸ Its designs are said to borrow “from major architectural feats and structures in Gulf cities like Riyadh, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Doha”.³⁹ This, along with other hints, such as naming the MBS ring after Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince

35 The GREAT Trust, p. 6


36 The GREAT Trust, p. 37

37 Al Jazeera, ‘Here’s the full text of Trump’s 20-point plan to end Israel’s war on Gaza’ (29 September 2025) <<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/9/29/heres-the-full-text-of-trumps-20-point-plan-to-end-israels-war-on-gaza>>

38 The GREAT Trust, p. 6

39 “The GREAT Trust for Gaza: A Blueprint for Dispossession, Not Reconstruction” Arab Centre Washington DC (4 September 2025), <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/the-great-trust-for-gaza-a-blueprint-for-dispossession-not-reconstruction/>

Mohammed Bin Salman, likely constitute an attempt to seduce Gulf States into investing in the plan, as explained by the Arab Center Washington DC:



Although opportunities do exist for private investors and public-private partnerships, the large sums required will almost certainly have to come from the Gulf states. The plan will not depend on US public funds, given that the Trump administration has largely dismantled foreign aid programs and agencies. Neither are European states or individual investors likely to be major contributors. Russia faces serious economic constraints, and China is unlikely to rush into supporting what will essentially be a US-Israeli venture.


US partners in the region have demonstrated their support for, or at least acquiescence to, proposals which seek to monetise on Gaza's geographical location, natural resources, and subjugation to entrench a foreign occupation (with continued Israeli involvement) in responses to the more recent 20-point plan which equally sought to exploit Gaza.

III. LEGAL ANALYSIS

i. The importance of context

The Great Trust purposefully turns a blind eye to the context in which it was developed. Before 7 October 2023, Gaza was a besieged and overcrowded area — a direct consequences of Israel’s entrenched apartheid, unlawful occupation and military blockade imposed in 2007 following the democratic election of Hamas. This blockade served to further subjugate, oppress, and fragment the Palestinian people — along with their territory — and cement Israel’s apartheid policies and control over the Palestinian people on both sides of the Green Line. Palestinians were prevented from meeting, grouping or forming any unified resistance to Israel’s Zionist regime, stripping them of the means and resources to realise their right to self-determination, as well as the array of fundamental socioeconomic rights to which all peoples are legally entitled. In 2019, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination confirmed the same in stating that Israel’s blockade of the Gaza Strip “continues to violate the right to freedom of movement and that it impedes the ability to access to basic

services, especially health care, and safe drinking water”.⁴⁰ Because of this, it urged Israel to:



[R]eview its blockade policy and urgently allow and facilitate the rebuilding of homes and civilian infrastructures; ensure access to necessary urgent humanitarian assistance; and also ensure access to the right to freedom of movement, housing, education, health care, water and sanitation, in compliance with the Convention.⁴¹

Even prior to its longstanding blockade, in 2000, Israel unilaterally decreased Palestine’s maritime space to six nautical miles to secure Israeli gas fields in the nearby Mari-B field, notwithstanding the 20 nautical miles agreed under the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This has limited a critical source of revenue and livelihood for Palestinian fishermen. This naval closure violates the International Convention on the Law of the Sea, as the fields exploited by Israel are located beyond its 12 nm territorial sea, where it is required to facilitate international maritime navigation.

With all movement by air, sea and land prevented by Israeli forces, the closure of Gaza has led to its reference as the world’s “largest open-air prison”.⁴² Israel has further crippled its economy by facilitating its decades-long policy of de-development thereof, conducted through the limitation of electricity supply

40 UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, ‘Concluding observations on the combined seventeenth to nineteenth reports of Israel’ (27 January 2020) UN Doc. CERD/C/ISR/CO/17-19, para. 44

41 UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, ‘Concluding observations on the combined seventeenth to nineteenth reports of Israel’ (27 January 2020) UN Doc. CERD/C/ISR/CO/17-19, para. 45

42 See Ilana Feldman, ‘Gaza as an Open-Air Prison’ (MERIP, 2015) <<https://merip.org/2015/06/gaza-as-an-open-air-prison/>>

to approximately five hours of electricity per day, the destruction of Gaza's agriculture, and attacks against fishermen and their livelihoods.⁴³ During Israel's successive military offensives on Gaza, it has targeted indispensable wastewater treatment plants, damaging sanitation infrastructures and leaving Gaza with very little consumable water. In the meantime, Israel has continued to exploit Palestinian natural resources, which is an essential consideration explaining its intent to maintain control over the unlawfully occupied Palestinian territory. These Israeli policies and practices constitute a critical impediment to the Palestinian people's realisation of their inalienable right of self-determination. Recognised by numerous UN Resolutions,⁴⁴ and enshrined in Common Article 1 of the International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the right to self-determination includes the right to economic development and the right to exercise permanent sovereignty over natural resources.

All the above considerations must now be considered in the context of Israel's genocide against Palestinians in Gaza, and escalating annexation of the occupied Palestinian territory.

On 26 January 2024, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) recognised a plausible case of genocide in Gaza,⁴⁵ a conclusion it reiterated on two additional


43 See Al-Haq, 'Special Focus: 55-years too long, a lethal occupation fuelled by international inaction' (8 June 2022) <<https://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/20136.html>>

44 UN General Assembly, Res 2672 (8 December 1970) A/RES/2672(XXV); UN General Assembly, Res 3236 (1974) A/RES/3236(XXIX); UN General Assembly Res 66/146 (29 March 2012) A/RES/66/146; UN General Assembly Res 67/158 (4 January 2013) A/RES/67/234

45 *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel)*, Provisional Measures, Order of 26 January 2024, I.C.J. Reports 2024, p. 3, <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20240126-ord-01-00-en.pdf>

occasions in its indication of further Orders on provisional measures directed at Israel in March and May 2024. Since then, Israel has continued its relentless genocidal campaign, killing 69,185 Palestinians and injuring 170,698 others, as well as destroying 92 percent of housing units as of [12 November 2025](#).⁴⁶

Israel has continued to exploit the international community's failure to respond to its unprecedented genocidal violence and mass forcible displacement of Palestinians, leveraging its impunity to further advance its Zionist settler-colonial agenda in Gaza. Israel's wholesale destruction of Gaza's infrastructure and carpet bombing of the Palestinian territory led the World Bank to conclude in February 2025:



Almost all sectors in Gaza have experienced a total halt in economic production. Prices in Gaza have soared over 300% in one year, with food prices alone up by 450%. Gaza's economy is projected to have contracted by 83% in 2024, dropping its overall contribution to the economy to 3%, despite being home to 40% of the population in the Palestinian territories.⁴⁷

On 21 March 2025, three weeks into Israel's complete siege, Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz warned that the army will permanently seize and annex territory

46 UN OCHA, "Humanitarian Situation Update #340 | Gaza Strip" (12 November 2025), <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-340-gaza-strip>

47 World Bank Group, "New Report Assesses Damages, Losses and Needs in Gaza and the West Bank" (16 February 2025), <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2025/02/18/new-report-assesses-damages-losses-and-needs-in-gaza-and-the-west-bank>

in Gaza if captives are not released.⁴⁸ By April, Katz was forming a bureau for “voluntary emigration”, intended to facilitate the transfer of Gaza’s population to other countries — an act which amounts to deportation,⁴⁹ which constitutes a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and when carried out with an intent to destroy, in conditions unfit for survival of the group, an act of genocide.

These inflammatory statements served as a precursor to the far-right Israeli government’s most explicit declaration of its colonial ambitions in Gaza to date. On 5 May, the day after IOF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir announced that the Israeli military will call up tens of thousands of reservists to expand their assault on the besieged Gaza Strip,⁵⁰ Israel’s Security Cabinet unanimously approved a new plan to “conquer Gaza and hold the territory under its control”.⁵¹ The new offensive, named ‘Operation Gideon’s Chariots’, sets out Israel’s vision for the future of Gaza and harks back to events in 1948 — specifically, the mass killing and large-scale forcible expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland with no right to return, along with the near-complete destruction of Palestinian society

48 “Katz orders expansion of Gaza ground operations, warns Hamas will ‘lose more territory’” *Ynet Global* (21 March 2025), <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/sycwshqnje>; “Israel Is Preparing to Occupy Gaza, Reinstate Military Rule and Fully Control the Palestinian Population” *Haaretz* (21 March 2025), <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-03-21/ty-article/premium/israel-is-preparing-to-occupy-gaza-reinstate-military-rule-and-fully-control-its-people/00000195-b99c-d862-a3b5-f9bfd5d90000>

49 “Israeli Government Approves Bureau for ‘Voluntary Emigration’ of Palestinians From Gaza” *Haaretz* (23 March 2025), <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-03-23/ty-article/premium/israeli-government-approves-bureau-for-voluntary-emigration-of-palestinians-from-gaza/00000195-c2ed-dcee-a7b7-ffdc83c0000>

50 “Israel’s army chief says reservists will expand Gaza operation” *Reuters* (4 May 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israels-army-chief-says-reservists-will-expand-gaza-operation-2025-05-04/>

51 “Israel okays ‘conquering Gaza, holding the territories,’ as IDF chief said to warn ‘we could lose’ the hostages” *The Times of Israel* (15 May 2025), <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-okays-expanding-gaza-op-as-idf-chief-said-to-warn-we-could-lose-the-hostages/>

at the hands of Zionist forces. ‘Operation Gideon’s Chariots’ envisions Israel having full, permanent military control of Gaza subsequent to the systematic forced displacement of Palestinians and the weaponisation of life-saving humanitarian aid.⁵²

As highlighted in Al-Haq’s report, ‘How to Hide a Genocide: The Role of Evacuation Orders and Safe Zones in Israel’s Genocidal Campaign in Gaza’,⁵³ Israeli policies force civilians to choose between starvation, dehydration and disease or forced displacement to areas with only marginally better conditions, yet still subject to relentless attack, in order to have any chance of survival. On 22 August 2025, in an overdue report, famine in Gaza was confirmed by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC).⁵⁴ These acts have been taken into account by the ICJ when determining that Israel was plausibly committing genocidal acts, including “deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part”.⁵⁵

Considering the above, and based on the content of the plan, the GREAT Trust’s omission of Israel’s manifestly illegal conduct, both since it began its genocidal campaign in October 2023 and throughout the course of its 77-year

52 “What is ‘Gideon’s Chariots’, Israel’s latest plan for Gaza?” *Middle East Eye* (9 May 2025), <https://www.middleeasteye.net/live-blog/live-blog-update/what-gideons-chariots-israels-latest-plan-gaza-0>

53 Al-Haq, “How to Hide a Genocide: The Role of Evacuation Orders and Safe Zones in Israel’s Genocidal Campaign in Gaza” (1 January 2025), <https://www.alhaq.org/publications/25781.html>

54 IPC, “GAZA STRIP: Famine confirmed in Gaza Governorate, projected to expand” (22 August 2025) <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipcinfo-website/countries-in-focus-archive/issue-134/en/>

55 Convention on Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Article II(c); Rome Statute of the ICC, Article 6(c).

long settler-colonial apartheid regime, attests to the fact that Palestinian interests, and fundamental rights, are entirely disregarded while Israeli impunity for mass atrocities committed against the protected population is maintained. The GREAT Trust also omits addressing the unlawfulness of Israel's occupation and conduct in pursuit of Palestinian erasure. As opposed to noting that Palestinians in Gaza are engaged in a lawful struggle for liberation, it misrepresents the Palestinian territory as an "Iranian proxy".⁵⁶ Such illegality has been determined by the ICJ in July 2024 in its landmark Advisory Opinion on the *Legal Consequences Arising From the Politics and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem* (Palestine Advisory Opinion). In this historic ruling, the ICJ concluded that Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territory breaches Israel's *erga omnes* obligation stemming from peremptory norms of international law, namely the right of people to self-determination and the prohibitions against the acquisition of territory by force and racial discrimination.⁵⁷

56 The GREAT Trust, p. 1.

57 ICJ, *Legal Consequences Arising From the Politics and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem* (Palestine Advisory Opinion) (19 July 2024) <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/186/186-20240719-adv-01-00-en.pdf>, para. 261.

ii. The legal status of the Gaza Strip under the GREAT Trust

Article 42 of the 1907 Hague Regulations reads:



Territory is considered occupied when it is actually placed under the authority of the hostile army.

In the *Palestine* Advisory Opinion, the ICJ confirmed the preexisting consensus that Gaza, despite Israel’s partial withdrawal in 2005, remains under Israeli occupation.⁵⁸ This is based on several factors, including, as mentioned above, Israel’s control of Gaza’s air and maritime space, but also its restrictions on movement of people and goods, collection of import and export taxes, and military control over the buffer zone, despite the withdrawal of its military presence in 2005.

Whether this multilateral partnership would modify Israel’s control over the Gaza Strip remains to be definitively determined. However, due to Israel being vested with the “overall security” of the Gaza Strip and maintaining “overarching rights to meet security needs”⁵⁹ along with its overtly stated goals to resettle and ultimately annex the Palestinian territory — the obvious implication is that Gaza would remain under Israel’s military authority, leaving Palestinians with the constant fear that they can be targeted at any time. Therefore, the territory

⁵⁸ *Palestine* Advisory Opinion, paras. 93-94

⁵⁹ The GREAT Trust, p. 10-11

would remain unlawfully occupied by Israel, leading to ongoing grave breaches of IHL, and peremptory norms of international law.

iii. The forced displacement of Palestinians

First of all, both “options” presented to Palestinians, the relocation to other countries or temporary housing in restricted parts of Gaza, violate international law, constituting the international crime of deportation and forced transfer, respectively, as prohibited by customary IHL and Article 49 of CG IV, and listed as a war crime and crime against humanity under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

The so-called “generous relocation packages” must be assessed within the above-mentioned context of the comprehensive destruction of Gaza, weaponisation of aid and manmade famine. Palestinians are offered a false “choice” between living in tiny and overcrowded pockets of the destroyed enclave, which only perpetuates the inhumane conditions they have been living in for years — and even more so since October 2023 — or “relocate” with a financial incentive that in no way compensates for the suffering and loss they have experienced, and will continue to endure as they attempt to build a life elsewhere. This amounts to the creation of coercive environments to force transfer in breach of sacrosanct provisions of international humanitarian law, prohibiting the forced transfer of the protected population from occupied territory.

As previously outlined, aid distribution sites operated by the GHF have fuelled the mass forcible transfer of Palestinians while equally functioning as killing fields where starving Palestinians are targeted. Al-Haq previously warned against the “privatized, militarized aid delivery model” upon which this foundation operates. “It is immoral and inhuman when those committing the genocide take responsibility to feed those whom they have starved”, pointed out Raji Sourani, Director of the Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR). “They are using the GFH to humiliate, degrade, and kill daily tens of starving people”.⁶⁰ Further, the GREAT Trust describes the GHF as a neutral and apolitical actor, despite its establishment and use a genocidal tool in Israel’s campaign of Palestinian erasure. The contemplated humanitarian operations of the GHF during the first year of the project, when it would have to “coordinate with the I[O]F, which maintains responsibility for overall security”. In other words, the GHF, already responsible for tens of thousands of Palestinian casualties, will work alongside Israel’s Zionist government and military responsible for the genocide against the very population it is intended to support.


Therefore, the alternative to “voluntary relocation” appears to be death or starvation. Given the stark asymmetry in power between the occupied Palestinian population and American and Israeli stakeholders involved in implementing the GREAT Trust, the potential “consent” of Palestinians cannot serve as justification for their deportation. This would contravene the spirit of Article 7, 8 and 47 of Geneva Convention IV Relative to the Protection of Civilian

60 “Human Rights and Legal Organizations Warn Gaza Humanitarian Foundation and Partners of Legal Liability for Complicity with Serious International Law Violations” (24 June 2025), <https://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/26558.html>

Persons in Times of War (CG IV) concerning the inviolability of the protection afforded by the Convention.

iv. The transformation of Gaza

The GREAT Trust proposes “reimagining Gaza” through the initiation of ten “mega projects”, including the “Elon Musk Smart Manufacturing Zone”, the “American Data Safe Heaven” and the “Gaza Trump Riviera & Islands”.⁶¹ This, too, contravenes IHL. Israel, as an Occupying Power, is bound by the *usufruct* rule enshrined in Article 55 of the 1907 Hague Regulations:



The occupying State shall be regarded only as administrator and *usufructuary* of public buildings, real estate, forests, and agricultural estates belonging to the hostile State, and situated in the occupied country. It must *safeguard* the capital of these properties, and administer them in accordance with the rules of *usufruct*.⁶²

The ICJ has already concluded that Israel’s policy of exploitation of natural resources in the occupied Palestinian territory is “inconsistent with its obligation to respect the Palestinian people’s right to permanent sovereignty over natural resources”.⁶³ In the *Palestine* Advisory Opinion, the ICJ noted that

61 The GREAT Trust, p. 6

62 Emphasis added

63 *Palestine* Advisory Opinion, para. 133

the use by the Occupying Power of natural resources must not exceed what is necessary for the purposes of the occupation and must be sustainable, avoiding environmental harm.⁶⁴ This is enshrined in Principle 23 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development of 1992, which provides that “[t]he environment and natural resources of people under . . . occupation shall be protected”.⁶⁵ The regional data centres intended to be established under the “American Data Safe Haven” represent just one example of how the plan for the GREAT Trust would breach these legal principles. Data centres are notorious for their impact on communities, ecosystems, and critical natural resources to the vast energy usage. Reportedly, some centres require 100 megawatts or more of electricity — for perspective, a single large-scale facility can consume as much electricity annually as 350,000 to 400,000 electric vehicles.⁶⁶ In the US, by the end of the decade, more energy will be consumed by data centres than the production of aluminium, steel, cement, chemicals, and all other energy-intensive goods combined.⁶⁷ In the case of Gaza, it is likely that the Gaza Marine Gas Field will be exploited to power said data centres — which rather than benefit the Palestinian people are designated to serve Israel and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).⁶⁸

Israel, the US, or any other foreign actor, does not acquire sovereign rights

64 *Palestine* Advisory Opinion, para. 133

65 See also International Law Commission, “Draft principles on protection of the environment in relation to armed conflicts, with commentaries”, 2022, UN doc. A/77/10, Principle 20

66 IEA, “What the data centre and AI boom could mean for the energy sector” (18 October 2024), <https://www.iea.org/commentaries/what-the-data-centre-and-ai-boom-could-mean-for-the-energy-sector>

67 Net Zero Insights, ‘The Environmental Cost of Data Centers’ (29 April 2025) <<https://netzeroinsights.com/resources/data-centers-environmental-cost/>>

68 The GREAT Trust, p. 6

over the Palestinian territory, including Gaza, and is generally precluded from introducing wholesale and long-term changes to the legal, political, institutional and economic structure of the occupied territory.⁶⁹ In an Expert Meeting held by the International Committee of the Red Cross in 2012,⁷⁰ it was suggested that the participation of the local population in decision-making could serve as a litmus test “according to which the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate concern for the well-being of the local population would hinge on whether the occupying power showed similar concern for the welfare of its own population” and whether the equivalent existed in the territory of the occupying State.⁷¹ These measures would have to ensure compliance with the obligation of the Occupying Power to treat the local population humanely, as per Article 27 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

At no point in the plan is there any genuine consideration of the interests of the Palestinian population and involvement thereof in the decision-making process. The GREAT Trust perpetuates the violation of the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people, including notably “the right of a people freely to determine its political status and to pursue its economic, social and cultural development” as reflected resolutions 1514 (XV) and 2625 (XXV), and it is enshrined in common Article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Already in July 2024, the ICJ determined that “the dependence of the

69 Article 43, Hague Regulations (1907); ICRC, “International humanitarian law and policy on Occupation” <https://www.icrc.org/en/law-and-policy/occupation>

70 ICRC, Expert Meeting: Occupation and Other Forms of Administration of Foreign Territory (2012), <https://www.icrc.org/sites/default/files/external/doc/en/assets/files/publications/icrc-002-4094.pdf>

71 ICRC, Expert Meeting: Occupation and Other Forms of Administration of Foreign Territory (March 2012) <<https://www.icrc.org/sites/default/files/external/doc/en/assets/files/publications/icrc-002-4094.pdf>> 76

West Bank, East Jerusalem, and especially of the Gaza Strip, on Israel for the provision of basic goods and services impairs the enjoyment of fundamental human rights, in particular the right to self-determination”.⁷² The violation of this absolute right and peremptory norm of international law would only be aggravated should the GREAT Trust be implemented. The involvement of Israeli Zionist officials in the drafting of the GREAT Trust, along with Israel’s long-standing rejection of Palestinian self-governance and statehood reveals the plan’s disregard for the principle of self-determination. No externally imposed authority can be legitimate without Palestinian consent, let alone Israel or its partner in the genocide against Palestinians in Gaza — or those that have profited from the destruction of Palestinian life, culture and society.

While “occupation law endeavours to strike a balance between the security needs of the occupying power on the one hand and the interests of the ousted power and the local population on the other”,⁷³ there is an inherent threat in the plan of the GREAT Trust due to allowing Israel maintain “overarching rights to meet security needs”.⁷⁴ This clause is indeed far too vague, and as history has shown, will be used by Israel to manufacture threats as a pretence under which it can continue its pursuit of Palestinian erasure.

72 *Palestine* Advisory Opinion, para. 241

73 ICRC, ‘Occupation’ <<https://www.icrc.org/en/law-and-policy/occupation>>

74 The GREAT Trust, p. 10

v. The continuing annexation of Gaza

Finally, Palestine and Israel are put on an equal footing for negotiating long-term security arrangements for Gaza. The plan is designed as a temporary governance scheme until a Palestinian polity is ready to step in. This is highly reminiscent of the Oslo Accords, which were supposed to create an interim period of five years, after which a Palestinian governing authority should have emerged. Yet, the Oslo Accords have been either violated or baselessly invoked and misinterpreted by Israel and its allies to justify further Palestinian land appropriation and to shield Israel from accountability processes before international courts.

The reality is that Palestine has not and is still not on an equal footing to negotiate any agreements with Israel. Regardless of this structural asymmetry of powers, Israel has always acted politically in bad faith with Palestinians. Allowing Israel to approve “long-term security arrangements” is tantamount to conditioning the imagined self-governing Gaza to its approval. Hence, the GREAT Trust appears to be a blueprint for the annexation of the Gaza Strip, forcibly displacing Palestinians and transforming Gaza into a “Riviera of the Middle East”.

This is made clear in the language used in the GREAT Trust, such as “public

land can be used as collateral”.⁷⁵ Therefore, though Israel’s annexation of Gaza began long before the drafting of the GREAT Trust, the GREAT Trust provides a hint as to how this will finally be achieved.

The annexation of Gaza constitutes a violation of peremptory norms of international law, in particular the acquisition of territory by force, enshrined in Article 2(2) of the UN Charter, and the right of all peoples to self-determination.

IV. CONCLUSION

The plan for the GREAT Trust follows previous statements by the US affirming that it endorses the mass deportation of Palestinians from Gaza. It supports Israel’s contention that there should be no Palestinian self-determination and State, by materialising Israel’s goals in Gaza. Not only does the plan ensure Israel’s continued control over the Gaza Strip, it shields its genocidal, settler-colonial apartheid regime and even rewards it with tourism resorts, high-tech facilities, and business opportunities as it continues its genocidal campaign against the Palestinian people.

⁷⁵ The GREAT Trust, p. 17

Alongside the Economic Peace to Prosperity Plan examined in Part I of Al-Haq's Trump Trilogy, the GREAT Trust will guide and inform the implementation of Trump's '20-point plan' for the Gaza Strip which, in a dangerous development on 17 November 2025, has now been enshrined in UN Security Council Resolution 2803.

In light of the above, we urge Third States to:

1. Strongly and publicly reject each of Trump's three plans for the Gaza Strip as a blatant violation of peremptory norms of international law, including the prohibition on the use of force and the right to self-determination;
2. Refrain from investing in public partnerships set up by the '20-point plan', which – if implemented – will uphold the provisions of the GREAT Trust and Economic Peace to Prosperity Plan as they relate to Gaza's economic development and foreign investment in the Palestinian territory. Instead, consider independent reconstruction projects in Gaza, endeavoured for the Palestinian people and consented to by the Palestinian people;
3. Refrain from hosting Palestinians forcibly displaced from Gaza under Israel's "voluntary immigration" plans, to avoid incurring responsibility for aiding and abetting this serious violation of international law;
4. Collaborate at the UN to reject UN Security Council Resolution 2803 and prevent its implementation, along with any future US plans regarding Palestine that deny the Palestinian people their fundamental rights in the interests of promoting its own geopolitical, capitalist interests;

5. Enact legislation prohibiting national companies from being involved in the intentional theft of Palestinian lands, or implement such existing legislation;
6. Take measures to sanction Israel for its wholesale destruction of Gaza and the Palestinian people, including an arms embargo, seeking accountability of those responsible before national and/or international courts, and cutting economic and ties with Israel; we urge in particular the European Union to suspend/terminate the Association Agreement with Israel.