

Trump floats plan to 'just clean out' Gaza

AFP- US President Donald Trump floated a plan Saturday to "just clean out" Gaza, and said he wants Egypt and Jordan to take Palestinians from the territory in a bid to create Middle East peace.

Describing Gaza as a "demolition site" after the Israel-Hamas war, Trump said he had spoken to Jordan's King Abdullah II about the issue and expected to talk to Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi on Sunday.

"I'd like Egypt to take people. And I'd like Jordan to take people," Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One.

"You're talking about probably a million and half people, and we just clean out that whole thing. You know, over the centuries it's had many, many conflicts that site. And I don't know, something has to happen."

The vast majority of Gaza's 2.4 million people have been displaced, often multiple times, by the war that began with Hamas's attack on southern Israel on October 7, 2023.

Trump said moving Gaza's inhabitants could be "temporarily or could be long term."

"It's literally a demolition site right now, almost everything is demolished and people are dying there," added Trump.

"So I'd rather get involved with some of the Arab nations and build housing at a different location where they can maybe live in peace for a change."

A fragile truce and hostage release deal between Israel and Hamas – which was signed on the last day of former US president Joe Biden's administration but which Trump has

claimed credit for – has entered its second week.

– Bomb shipment released –

Trump's new administration has promised "unwavering support" for Israel, without yet laying out details of its Middle East policy.

Trump confirmed on Saturday that he had ordered the Pentagon to release a shipment of 2,000-lb bombs for Israel which was blocked by his predecessor Biden.

"We released them. We released them today," Trump said. "They paid for them and they've been waiting for them for a long time."

Israel's retaliatory offensive has left much of the Palestinian territory in ruins, with infrastructure destroyed, and the United Nations estimates reconstruction will take many years.

In October during his presidential campaign, former real estate developer Trump said that war-torn Gaza could be "better than Monaco" if it was "rebuilt the right way."

Trump's son-in-law and former White House employee Jared Kushner suggested in February that Israel empty Gaza of civilians to unlock the potential of its "waterfront property."

For Palestinians, any attempt to move them from Gaza would evoke dark historical memories of what the Arab world calls the "Nakba" or catastrophe – the mass displacement of Palestinians during Israel's creation 75 years ago.

Israel has denied having any plans to force Gazans to move.

But some extreme-right members of the Israeli government have publicly supported the idea of Gazans leaving the Palestinian territory en masse.

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