

Global Pushback at Israeli Plans to Displace Palestinians From Gaza

Top officials, including from close ally US, firmly reject the idea of displacing the indigenous Palestinian population of the besieged enclave.

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Top officials from around the world have firmly dismissed the possibility of a second [Nakba](#) – the “catastrophe” in the late 1940s when Zionist militias forcibly displaced more than 700,000 Palestinians for the establishment of the State of Israel – or what more recently high-ranking far-right Israeli officials have called “voluntary” resettlement of Palestinians overseas.

Israel unveiled its nefarious design amid a brutal war on Gaza, where it has killed nearly 23,000 people since October 7 – most of them women and children.

Despite growing global pressure on Israel to end what has been described as a “collective punishment” of Gaza's civilians, the far-right Netanyahu had doubled down on its rhetoric along with the military offensive.

In recent days, Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich has called for Palestinian residents in besieged Gaza to leave “voluntarily” to be replaced by Israelis.

Ultra-nationalist Security Minister and rabble-rouser Itamar Ben Gvir made similar remarks, [calling](#) the exodus of Palestinians and the establishment of Israeli settlements a “correct,

just, moral and humane solution”.

According to [The Times of Israel](#), a senior Israeli official has held talks with several countries over what it calls the “potential absorption” of Palestinians.

[Congo](#) is alleged to have held “secret contacts” about the prospect of taking in Palestinians.

[Saudi Arabia](#), according to The Times of Israel, was also discussed amid a construction boom in the Kingdom concerning the prospect of taking in “hundreds of thousands of Palestinians for work.”

However, the idea has been quickly condemned by the international community.

UN human rights chief Volker Turk has said he was “very disturbed” after comments by senior Israeli officials calling for Palestinians to leave Gaza.

“Very disturbed by high-level Israeli officials’ statements on plans to transfer civilians from Gaza to third countries,” Turk wrote on X, formerly Twitter.

The European Union’s top foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, also condemned the remarks and the possibility of displacing Palestinians from Gaza.

“I strongly condemn the inflammatory and irresponsible statements by Israeli ministers Ben Gvir & Smotrich slandering the Palestinian population of Gaza and calling for a plan for their emigration,” he [wrote](#) X, formerly Twitter.

Borrell also underscored how “forced displacements are strictly prohibited as a grave violation of IHL (international humanitarian law), and words matter.”

The UK has [said](#) that it “firmly rejects any suggestion of the resettlement of Palestinians outside of Gaza”.

In a written statement, it added that it “share(s) the concerns of our allies and partners that Gazans should not be subject to forcible displacement or relocation from Gaza.”

In 2005, Israel unilaterally withdrew the last of its troops and settlers from Gaza, ending its occupation of the coastal enclave dating back to 1967. Nevertheless, today, Israel holds close control over the territory’s borders, leaving some rights groups to declare it an [open-air prison](#).

Even Israel’s all-weather ally, the US, balked at the idea.

State Department Spokesman Matthew Miller [issued](#) a written statement condemning the remarks while calling the rhetoric “inflammatory and irresponsible”.

“We have been told repeatedly and consistently by the Government of Israel, including by the Prime Minister, that such statements do not reflect the policy of the Israeli government. They should stop immediately,” he said.

Publication Axios [described](#) the US’ remarks as “the strongest public condemnation the Biden administration has voiced against Israeli government officials since Hamas’ October 7 attack.”

It added that the US remarks signal “the growing concerns in the Biden administration that Netanyahu isn’t reigning in the radical-right wing ministers in his coalition.”

However, Ben Gvir - who in 2007 was convicted of inciting racism and supporting a terrorist group that had made previous calls for genocide against Palestinians - [rebuffed](#) the US’ rebuke.

“I really admire the United States of America, but with all due respect, we are not another star in the American flag,” he said on social media.

Ben Gvir went on to underscore the pursuit of Israel’s interests behind the plan to displace the Palestinians.

“The United States is our best friend, but first of all, we will do what is best for the State of Israel: the migration of hundreds of thousands from Gaza will allow the residents of the enclave to return home and live in security and protect the IDF soldiers,” he added on X.

Other nations have earlier expressed fears about the potential displacement of Palestinians from Gaza.

In November, almost a month into Israel’s onslaught in Gaza, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov linked the resettlement of Palestinians to a threat to the establishment of a Palestinian state.

After a meeting with his Kuwaiti counterpart Salem Abdullah Al Jaber Al Sabah, Lavrov underscored that any potential resettlement plans would not bring peace to the region but only sow the “grapes of wrath”.

The ongoing Israeli onslaught has levelled large areas of Gaza to the ground, leaving swathes in ruins.

[Reportedly](#), 60 percent of the enclave’s infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed, and around two million residents have been displaced amid acute shortages of food, clean water and medicines.

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