

War on Gaza: Israeli Board Game Calls on Players to ‘Come Build Your House in Gaza!’

An interactive game handed out at a right-wing conference in Israel, attended by ministers and parliament members, proposes new Hebrew names for neighbourhoods in Gaza

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Delegates at an [Israeli](#) conference calling for the re-settlement of Israelis in Gaza were handed a board game that seemingly allowed players to map out where they would establish homes in the enclave after it was conquered.

The game, titled, “Come Build Your House in Gaza!” shows a layout of Gaza separated into different neighbourhoods with Hebrew names and explanations of the meaning behind each of them.

It was seen at the Victory Of Israel conference, an event hosted in Jerusalem on Sunday by right-wing Israeli politicians, campaigners and religious figures calling for the building of Israeli settlements in Gaza after the end of the war.

The conference was attended by 11 cabinet ministers and 15 coalition members of parliament.

Players of the game are invited to place wooden house-shaped blocks, with their names written on stickers, on the neighbourhoods they want to settle in.

Among them is the “Heroes of Gaza Neighbourhood”, which it says will be established on top of the Shujaiya neighbourhood. An estimated [300 people](#) were killed in a single Israeli strike on a residential block in Shujaiya in December of last year.

“The translation to Hebrew is ‘Neighbourhood of the Brave,’” reads the caption, referring to its current name.

“The name comes from the Muslims who fought the Crusaders in the Gaza area. The name can also be attributed to the [Israeli army] fighters who fought in the city,” it says.

Another is listed as the “Gavish neighbourhood”, currently al-Nasser, which the game says is named after Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, who fought with Israel repeatedly, including in the 1967 war that saw the capture of Gaza.

“Its name will be changed to honour chief commander of the Southern Command in the 6-day war, Yeshayahu Gavish,” reads the caption, using another name for the 1967 war.

Israel has occupied Gaza since 1967, and during that time built numerous settlements across the territory in which Israeli Jews settled.

In 2005, however, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon ordered the destruction and evacuation of the Gaza settlements, a move which many right-wing Israelis opposed and continue to regard as a mistake to be rectified.

‘Control Territory’

The conference came just days after the [International Court of Justice \(ICJ\) ruling](#) on South Africa’s genocide case against Israel, for which it heard evidence earlier this month.

The court gave Israel six orders regarding the siege and bombardment of Gaza. One of those was that Israel “must take measures within its power to prevent and punish the direct and public incitement to commit genocide in relation to the members of the Palestinian groups in the Gaza Strip”.

The court also cited a series of statements made by Israeli leaders as evidence of incitement and dehumanising language against Palestinians, including comments made by Israeli President Isaac Herzog.

During the conference, Israel’s far-right National Security Minister [Itamar Ben Gvir](#) called for Palestinians to be “voluntarily encouraged to leave” Gaza.

In response to calls from the audience for Palestinians to be displaced from Gaza, Ben Gvir responded by saying: “You are right, voluntary encouragement, let them go from here.

“We must return to Gush Katif and northern Samaria... if you don’t want it to happen again for the seventh or tenth time, we must return home and control the territory, encouraging immigration, and the death penalty for terrorists,” he added.

Gush Katif was a bloc of 17 Israeli settlements in southern Gaza. At the conference, Ben Gvir, along with other ministers, signed a petition for “victory and renewal of the settlement in Gaza” during the event.

The document said that signatories pledged that they would “grow Jewish settlements full of life in Gaza”.

Afterwards, attendees were filmed celebrating the move by waving the Israeli flag and

cheering. Following Ben Gvir's speech, people could be heard chanting "death to Arabs".

Some of the statements made at the conference have led to backlash, with some pointing out that they could violate the ICJ's orders.

Itay Epshtain, an Israel-based special advisor for the Norwegian Refugee Council, [shared a video](#) in which Ben Gvir and Finance Minister [Bezale Smotrich](#) could be seen arm-in-arm, dancing together at the conference.

[#Israeli](#) Ministers (including [#Smotrich](#) and [#BenGvir](#)) dancing at the conference would form part of the compelling evidence of noncompliance with the [#ICJ](#) order. pic.twitter.com/TQWDxWe0lu

— Itay Epshtain (@EpshtainItay) [January 28, 2024](#)

The human rights lawyer said that the image "would form part of the compelling evidence of noncompliance" with the ICJ's recent order to take all measures within its power to prevent acts of genocide and to punish acts of incitement.

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Featured image: "Come Build Your House in Gaza!" on display at the Victory of Israel conference in Jerusalem, on 28 January 2024 (Oren Ziv/MEE)

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