

OPINION | Palestinian prime minister: A day-after plan for Gaza

The path forward won't be easy. But it is within reach.

By Mohammad Mustafa

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Palestinian children sit among the rubble of a destroyed mosque near the Deir al-Balah refugee camp in central Gaza on Sept. 3. (Hussam al-Masri/Reuters)

Five weeks ago marked 300 days of the war on Gaza. Such levels of mass killing, destruction, forced displacement and starvation of our people are unprecedented in recent history.

In Gaza, fear and despair dominate as bombs relentlessly fall. Families huddle together in makeshift shelters, their homes reduced to rubble. [Schools](#) and [hospitals](#), once havens, have become targets. Children's cries of terror pierce the night as parents struggle to protect them. The stench of death hangs in the air, with hurried burials offering little dignity. [Starvation](#) and privation intensify, with food, clean water and medical supplies scarce and dwindling. War crimes and massacres weigh heavily on a people who have suffered far too long.

Yet amid this devastation, there is resilience, a refusal to surrender to despair. This suffering, a consequence of both war and prolonged occupation, must end for peace and stability to be achieved.

Since its formation in April, my government has been working tirelessly to stabilize the deteriorating situation in the West Bank while also preparing for "[the day after](#)" in the [Gaza Strip](#). We are committed to the welfare, security and dignity of our people, and to leading recovery and reconstruction efforts once a permanent cease-fire is achieved. This will take place in parallel to continuing the implementation of essential reforms to consolidate the foundations for an independent Palestinian state.

With a permanent cease-fire, the Palestinian government stands ready to resume responsibility for the Gaza Strip, leading efforts to fully integrate governance across both it and the West Bank. This integration is essential not only for effective relief, recovery and reconstruction in Gaza, but also as a step toward the broader goal of achieving a permanent political agreement in line with international law and a [two-state solution](#).

Our “One Palestine” vision, rooted in the unity of the Palestinian people and our shared identity, is central to this effort. As we steadfastly pursue an end to the Israeli military occupation and the realization of our right to self-determination, these principles will guide the rebuilding and governance of Gaza, addressing the unprecedented [humanitarian crisis](#) and laying the foundation for lasting peace and stability.

However, we cannot achieve this alone. The sweeping destruction and vast recovery needs in Gaza demand a coordinated and robust response from the international community. Governing Gaza, restoring essential services, rebuilding homes and infrastructure, and stabilizing the lives and livelihoods of our people will require significant international commitment and support. Without global solidarity and action, the path to recovery and lasting peace will be unattainable.

Supporting and facilitating a nonpartisan Palestinian government is crucial for governing and serving our people across Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Empowering the Palestinian Authority to deliver responsive, transparent and accountable governance is the only legitimate and viable path forward. This approach is essential not only for rebuilding Gaza but also for ensuring that the broader region moves toward an equitable, just and prosperous future.

Our day-after plan for governing Gaza is part of a broader effort to empower the Palestinian government, rebuild trust among our citizens, and reinforce the foundations of democracy at both the local and national levels. It is structured around the following key pillars:

1. Relief and early recovery

Immediate relief and early recovery efforts, under the leadership and strategic coordination of the Palestinian government, will need to be supported by the U.N. Relief and Works Agency, other specialized U.N. agencies, donors and international partners already active in Gaza, in addition to Palestinian private-sector and civil-society institutions. Priorities include debris removal, dignified temporary shelter and the restoration of essential services such as water, sanitation, energy, health and education. Immediate support for livelihood restoration and economic recovery is also critical. These efforts will be closely coordinated with Palestinian ministries and agencies. A Gaza Early Recovery Committee will be established to align all efforts with the government’s broader relief, recovery and reconstruction plan.

2. Reconstruction and long-term recovery

An independent agency will be established to lead, coordinate and manage all reconstruction and long-term recovery efforts in Gaza. This agency will operate with full financial and managerial independence and be subject to audits according to the highest international standards. Oversight will be provided by a board of directors comprising respected Palestinian figures, including members of the diaspora. To ensure transparency and accountability, a Gaza reconstruction trust fund will be established at the World Bank, with fiduciary oversight and guidance provided by an international advisory board.

3. Security, rule of law and border control

Restoring security and the rule of law in Gaza will require restructuring its police force as well as reintegrating and rationalizing staff based on capacity and need. This process will include personnel from both before and after 2007, contingent on successful vetting and capacity assessment. Senior police leadership, appointed by the Palestinian government, will also coordinate with the heads of municipal councils to ensure efficient and responsive local governance. International partners will play a crucial role in providing necessary equipment and support for capacity building. Additionally, international security assistance may be sought by the Palestinian government as needed. Border control in Gaza will be managed by the Palestinian Authority, with interim international support from relevant actors, as with the [European Union Border Assistance Mission of 2005](#).

4. Integration of institutions and civil service

Our plan emphasizes the vital need to integrate and harmonize institutions and civil service across the West Bank and Gaza. To facilitate this, we will appoint interim senior leadership for government institutions in Gaza, serving temporarily until permanent managers are selected through a transparent, merit-based process. Staff will be selected based on technical needs, with all personnel decisions adhering to meritocratic and transparent criteria.

5. Restoring local government functions

As an immediate step to restore and reintegrate local governance in Gaza and ensure local ownership of the recovery, I will appoint independent and highly qualified local figures to the municipal and local councils for one year. These councils will be provided with budgets to support local projects that meet urgent needs and deliver tangible benefits to the people of Gaza, under clear guidelines set by my government. At the end of this one-year transition period, local government elections will be held in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to ensure democratic engagement, participation and representation in local governance.

The [unprecedented destruction](#) in Gaza demands not only serious global support but also a collective commitment to reconstruction and recovery. We call on our Arab neighbors and all partner nations to stand with us in this monumental effort. Together, we can address the immediate needs of our people, restore essential services, rebuild the economy and rekindle hope.

This path, though challenging, is the only viable way forward — one that lays the foundations for lasting peace, security and prosperity. It is not just about our future as the Palestinian people, our steadfast pursuit of self-determination, and our right to live in freedom and dignity; it is about ensuring stability and a better future for all people in the region.

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