

# **Declare the Gaza Strip as the State of Palestine**

February 3, 2026

## **Over 150 Nations Now Recognize a Palestinian State**

Since 1988, 147 nations of the total 193 members of the United Nations had “recognized” the State of Palestine as a symbolic gesture even though Palestinians still do not have a land to call their own for such a state. In September, 2025, Israel’s war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip caused ten more nations to join these 147 for a total of 157 nations that recognized Palestine at the UN General Assembly meeting known as the International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution. These nations included France, Canada, Australia, and the UK. The U.S. refused to attend since it opposed the creation a Palestinian state.

Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says this recognition of a Palestinian state “rewards Hamas’ monstrous terrorism.” Oh yeah! What about all those 56 years before this war started, in which Israel possessed the Occupied Territories (according to the UN charter, member Israel is supposed to give back that land), and Israel resisted the creation of a Palestinian state, nearly all of it during peacetime. How about making the reverse argument in response: nations refusing to recognize a Palestinian state have contributed to this status quo engineered by Israel? This Gaza War has awakened the conscience of more nations to realize they must do something to help the disenfranchised, impoverished, suffering, and now starving and dying Palestinians.

## **The Arab League Endorses the Egypt Plan for Gaza**

On March 4, 2025, the Arab League endorsed a detailed plan proposed by Egypt for the Gaza Strip to be rebuilt after Israel’s war with Hamas ends. Details include financing reconstruction by Arab states, governing by Gaza technocrats and a reformed Palestinian Authority, security forces involving trained police, and peace with Israel. The plan rejects Hamas and forcibly displacing Palestinians from Gaza. Arab governments that may be financial donors for reconstruction are Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. Gaza enclaves could house Palestinians during reconstruction. This plan was gaining solid traction despite Israel and the U.S. rejecting it.

The U.S. began its reconstruction plan for the Gaza Strip on February 2, 2026, headed by Jared Kushner, President Donald Trump’s Orthodox Jewish son-in-law and real estate mogul like Trump. The first stage is removal of war debris and some damaged buildings. So far, the plan is ambitious with an industrial sector and parks that don’t allow enough housing for 2.2 million Gaza Palestinians. It will become obvious with this plan that Gaza needs to expand. I suspect that will arouse what I’ve always been saying—EXPAND GAZA, EXPAND ISRAEL. That is, Israel does a land swap involving adjacent Gaza territory and the West Bank.

Israel announced in September, 2025, it’s implementation of a 20-year old plan for a substantial Jewish settlement in the West Bank called E1. It will be located near Jerusalem to its east. There are Jewish settlements between Jerusalem and E1. West Bank Palestinians say it will effectively divide the West Bank, making it increasingly unlikely that a Palestinian state could form there. The Israeli government administration has increasingly talked of unilaterally annexing Jewish settlements in the West Bank to Israel. The Gaza reconstruction may make that more doable.

### **My Book Proposes an Alternative Two-State Solution**

Ever since my book, *Palestine Is Coming: The Revival of Ancient Philistia*, was published, in 1990, events have been moving in The Levant in the direction that I lay out in my book. I claim the traditional two-state solution for solving the Israeli Palestinian conflict—a Palestinian state in the two separated territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip—has always been a non-starter due to history and religion. You can change demographics, but you can't change history or religion. Thus, my book's proposal for solving the problem is that the Palestinian state be located only in the coastal plain as a very expanded Gaza Strip, Israel annexing all of the West Bank in accordance with the Jewish religion requiring all of Eretz Yisrael (Land of Israel), and Egypt relinquishing land between Gaza and the Wadi el Arish, twenty-five miles south of the Strip.

This solution via land swaps would involve a transfer of peoples to territories equal in size. The West Bank could be viewed as two parts divided by a line extending from Jerusalem eastward to the north end of the Dead Sea. The two, comparably-sized land portions in the north and south to be exchanged could be as follows: (1) Israel would forfeit to Palestinians all of its land south of the Nahal Sorek, west of the Shephelah, and south to the Israel-Egypt border in exchange for Israel annexing all the West Bank land north of the dividing line, (2) Egypt would forfeit to the Palestinians the northwestern portion of the Sinai Peninsula, between Rafah and the Wadi el Arish, and (3) Israel would annex remaining West Bank land south of the dividing line. It would result in two largely rectangularly shaped nations lying side-by-side, with no non-contiguous borders, and the slopes of the Shephelah as a visual landmark between much of the two nations.

### **My Proposal Is Equal-Sized Land Swaps and a Transfer of Peoples**

The first land swap would be an equal tradeoff between Israelis and Palestinians. And the parcel sizes of the southern West Bank and the NW Sinia would be equal in size as well. Furthermore, Israel would no doubt demand keeping the valuable water resource in the West Bank Mountain Aquifer. (See my article, "Israel's Future Water Needs.") Thus, a Palestinian state in the coastal plain likely could not survive without some of that water. But it could survive if Egypt and other Nile riparian nations would allow some Nile River water to be transported to the Palestinian state in Gaza. (See my article, "Extending Egypt's Al-Salam Canal to the Palestinian State.")

Egypt must be compensated for both concessions. How should this be done? There may be several ways that Israel could compensate Egypt for its relinquishing of the NW Sinai to Gaza Palestinians in exchange for Israel annexing the southern West Bank. One could be that Israel would finance some of Egypt's North Sinai Development Project of its NE coastal region in which its Sheikh Gabar Canal (El-Salam Canal extension) flows. And Palestinians could barter with Egypt and other Nile riparian nations for Nile water with their gas (and oil?) deposits it would realize offshore. (See "Mediterranean Gas Reserves.")

### **Israel and the U.S. Have Opposed Creating a Palestinian State**

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his coalition government oppose the creation of a Palestinian state. But they may not resist this alternative proposal since it provides for Israel to annex all the West Bank, which satisfies the Jews' religion in acquiring the entire Eretz Yisrael.

The coastal plain Jews would forfeit was never part of Eretz Yisrael—the Jews’ “ancestral land.” Israeli leaders have often claimed that Eretz Yisrael, their ancestral land, extends “from sea to sea.” Not true! I state in my book (p. 28), “Contrary to some Israeli and Christian claims and assumptions, the ancient Israelites never possessed the entire Plain of Philistia, and what part they did occupy was for only very brief periods.” Chapter 2 then provides some of this history. It shows that modern Israel still only possesses about half of Eretz Yisrael, and most of Israel’s coastal plain, such as the former “land of the Philistines,” was never a part of Eretz Yisrael.

U.S. presidents Joe Biden and Donald Trump have been extremely supportive of Netanyahu and his administration to the detriment of Palestinians. The foolish, one-day attack by Hamas forces against Israel on October 7, 2023, resulted in 1,200 Israeli deaths. The Israel Defense Forces then invaded the Gaza Strip, demolishing the place with bombs and killing over 60,000 Palestinians to date. This ongoing war has turned the world against Israel, thus increasing antisemitism. The UN estimates 90% of the housing for the 2.2 million Gaza Palestinians has been demolished.

U.S. influence on Israel is strong, especially since the U.S. for decades has given Israel \$3B in aid as its #1 ally. Trump, a former New York real estate developer, wants the U.S. to “take over” the Gaza Strip and rebuild it into “The Riviera of the Middle East.” The Trump and Netanyahu administrations have been trying to convince other nations, especially the war-torn country of South Sudan, to resettle all the Palestinians from the Gaza Strip. When Trump was asked if Palestinians would live in Gaza after its reconstruction, he said, “No, they wouldn’t because they’re going to have much better housing elsewhere.” That will not fly!

### **Nations Could Declare the Gaza Strip as the State of Palestine**

The international community strongly opposes forcefully removing Palestinians from the Gaza Strip. Besides, Netanyahu has said he and his administration only want to free Gaza of Hamas, adding that “we don’t want to keep it.” Then, what about uniting the Egypt plan with Trump’s idea without removing Palestinians? That is, the Gaza Strip would become the State of Palestine *and* The Riviera of the Middle East. Trump administration has serious plans for reconstructing the Gaza Strip. They include it being like the Marshall Plan or the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI), both successfully enacted following WWII.

The world’s nations that will be recognizing a Palestinian state could try to prevent Palestinians from being forced out of Gaza by recognizing the Gaza Strip as the Palestinian state with the added expectation that it be enlarged via land swaps through negotiations between Israel and this State of Palestine. If Israeli leaders refused to accept this recognition of a Palestinian state in Gaza, those nations could unitedly impose economic and political sanctions against Israel. And they could call for Israel to conduct a referendum about their recognition of Palestine in Gaza as well as take a previous survey of Palestinians, asking whether they favor this proposal.

### **Two States Truly Lying Side-By-Side Would Be Much Better**

This alternative two-state proposal would truly be a side-by-side geographical arrangement. Its transfer of peoples would require an additional cost, but its geographical arrangement would enable a much better protective security and economic viability for both parties. And as the subtitle of my book indicates, it would replicate how things were in that region 3,000 years ago.

In fact, that is what Israel claims for Jews worldwide in its Proclamation of Independence—“to go back to the land of their fathers and regain their statehood. ... proclaim[ing] the right of the Jewish people to national revival in their own country. ... Eretz Yisrael, ... the Land of Israel ... their ancestral land.” Then let Palestinians have what remains—a very expanded Gaza Strip that would approximate “the land of the Philistines,” from whom Palestinians derive their name.