

**Possible influence of Russia-Europe row**

One of the key issues is how the format of the upcoming negotiations will take shape. Previously, the negotiating parties included the Security Council countries plus Germany. After the US unilaterally withdrew from the JCPOA, the format shifted to 1+4. The question now is whether this format can continue in the future and whether its continuation would even serve our interests. The Europeans will likely express

their unwillingness to sit at the table with Russia, as they believe that Russia has jeopardized European security, with its invasion of Ukraine being an attack on Europe as a whole. As far as I know, this matter has not yet been thoroughly examined.

**China, Russia lack leverage in negotiations**

In reality, the core issue lies between Iran and the United States, with the main sanctions against Iran imposed by the

US. The question arises: given this situation, is it even necessary for other parties to be involved in the negotiations? Of course, the snapback mechanism is in the hands of the Europeans, and from this perspective, an agreement with them is essential. However, China and Russia bring nothing to the table, whether positively or negatively, regarding the negotiations, and at one point, the Russians even hampered the 2015 JCPOA talks, as Mr. Zarif has pointed out. During

the discussions to revive the JCPOA, the former foreign minister, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, explicitly stated in an interview with Al-Mayadeen in March 2023 that "We were on the verge of reaching an agreement when the Ukraine war broke out and everything changed". Countries like China and Russia may exert influence on Iran through pressure, but they hold no significant leverage in the 1+4 and 1+5 negotiation formats. They have neither sanctioned us nor are they

likely to oppose the lifting of sanctions against Iran as permanent members of the Security Council. From the outset, we sought their presence, perhaps with the consideration that we wouldn't negotiate solely with the US, thus giving rise to such a format. While European sanctions were also in place at that time, the involvement of Russia and China was not particularly relevant. It's possible that we may reach a format in which Russia and China are not present at all.

**US-European cooperation in JCPOA revival**

Regarding Europe's role, US President Donald Trump's stance is significant; we need to see how he collaborates with Europe on this front and whether the Iran issue will become one of the few points of common ground between Europe and the Trump administration. The Europeans may also want to leverage this card in their dealings with the US.



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**ANALYSIS  
EXCLUSIVE**

## Achievements, regional impacts of Gaza cease-fire

*It has been over 480 days since Operation Al-Aqsa Storm began on October 7, 2023, and more than 46,000 Palestinians have been martyred in this war. With the mediation of Qatar, Egypt, and the United States, a cease-fire was recently signed between Israel and Hamas. This cease-fire will reportedly be implemented in three phases. In this article, various dimensions of the Gaza war and the cease-fire are examined, including what it achieved and how it changed the Middle East.*



Palestinians celebrate the announcement of a cease-fire deal between Hamas and Israel in Deir al-Balah, Gaza, on January 15, 2025.

● ABDEL KAREEM HANA/AP

**Geopolitical impacts of Gaza war**

The Gaza war and the humanitarian crisis it created, showed the extent that some will go to ignore human rights. The war was characterized by an economic blockade of Gaza; the destruction of vital infrastructure such as hospitals, schools, and water and electricity facilities; a severe shortage of medicine and medical equipment; negative psychological effects, and a lack of access to health and psychiatric services. Geopolitically, it also marginalized the normalization of Arab relations with Israel. Hamas' attack on Israel and the start of the Gaza war on October 7, 2023, showed that the pattern of hostility in relations between Palestine and Israel still prevails. The support of some regional governments and Islamic groups for Hamas further indicates that being optimistic about an end to the violence is not realistic. The scope of the war eventually expanded in the region to include various countries and groups, most notably Lebanon, Yemen, and the Islamic Resistance movements in Iraq. As Israel's war in Gaza intensified, the Lebanese group Hezbollah engaged in cross-border firefights with Israel. The two sides have a long history of war and conflict dating back several decades. Yemeni Ansarullah (Houthis), in support of Gaza, targeted ships sailing in the Red Sea to Israel; it soon prompted the United States and its allies

to take retaliatory measures, further expanding the war. Iraqi forces affiliated with the Resistance Front, in support of Hamas, attacked American positions in Iraq and Syria from time to time. The Gaza war forged a consensus in different parts of the world about the inefficiency of the order governing international relations. Consequently, they called for reform of global governance institutions, including the United Nations Security Council. It was shown that the current international order overlooks basic principles such as solidarity, justice, and trust, and cannot even fulfill its minimal responsibilities. As a result of all the above, the prospect of long-term peace in the Middle East is currently in a state of ambiguity.

**Trump's view on Gaza war**

Regarding the new US president's approach to the war in the enclave, we must first examine his approach to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as a whole. In his first term as president, Donald Trump took three important steps in the interests of the Zionist regime:

1. He moved the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.
2. He proposed the Deal of the Century as a plan for Arab-Israeli peace through the creation of an independent Palestinian state with specific conditions that benefit Israel.
3. He jumpstarted the Abraham Accords to normalize Arab-Israeli relations.

Trump's past measures show his firm support for the Zionist regime. However, he has also repeatedly promised to end the war in the Middle East on

the campaign trail. It should be noted that he sees himself as a deal-maker and takes pride in that. Moving forward, the following scenarios can be considered: (a) The United States may continue previous policies, which will prolong the war and break Trump's election promise; (b) the US may pursue ending the war through diplomacy and applying pressure on Hamas, such as disarming the group or asking for other guarantees; and (c) the US may increase pressure on Iran in order to reduce or prevent the Islamic Republic's support for Resistance groups. Alternatively, Trump may choose to take a different route and deal with the Arabs to complete the Abraham Accords. This strategy makes sense for Trump for three reasons: First, realistically, this solution is in line with his proposed strategies of America First and Make America Great Again. As Trump promised in his campaign, he thereby avoids entering into conflicts that would erode America's power in pursuing its national interests. Second, Trump's view of the Middle East is economic. In order to achieve his economic goals, the United States must maintain strategic relations with its traditional allies in the region, lest they turn towards China. Third, given Israel's crimes in Gaza and the outpouring of regional and global condemnations, Saudi Arabia has allegedly tied the establishment of an independent Palestinian state to normalizing relations with the Zionist regime. Pressuring Netanyahu to accept an independent Palestinian state in order to gain Arab consent to normalize relations is Trump's likely option regarding how to



Market stalls open amid the rubble of buildings destroyed during Israeli strikes on Khan Younis, southern Gaza, on January 15, 2025.

● BASHAR TALEB/AFP

deal with the Gaza war.

The first phase of the cease-fire did not discuss how Gaza would be governed in the future, but it is expected to be a significant challenge for both sides. Over the past 15 months, the United States has taken a dual stance on the Palestinian Authority's governance of Gaza. Initially, they wanted Gaza to be handed over to the Palestinian Authority, but Israel's failure to destroy Hamas led the Biden administration to back away from this decision. Secondly, the US and its regional and extra-regional allies have said that Mahmoud Abbas's shelf life has expired, and they want Mahmoud Dahlan to replace him.

**Achievements of Gaza cease-fire**

1. Hamas was given international guarantees regarding the continuation of the cease-fire after the end of the first phase of the agreement
2. The presence of the Israeli regime in the Netzarim and Philadelphia corridors is to end.
3. The Rafah crossing is to reopen.
4. Refugees are to return to their homes unconditionally.
5. Commitments have been made by international entities for the comprehensive reconstruction of Gaza.
6. The Israeli regime evidently failed in destroying Hamas; when the war in Gaza began, Israel had declared its most important strategy to be the complete destruction of Hamas, but some 15 months after that statement, it was forced to negotiate a cease-fire with Hamas.
7. The United States' strategies in the Gaza war fell flat as well. Following Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, the Biden administra-

tion announced its strategies for this war to be preventing the war from spreading to other countries in the region, releasing captives held by Hamas, and helping to reduce civilian casualties in Gaza in order to maintain the honor and credibility of the United States and the Zionist regime, but it failed to achieve a single one of these strategies.

8. For future negotiations, the principle of "land for peace" is being reconsidered for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. Approved at the Arab Summit in Beirut on March 28, 2002, this principle is the main Arab plan to end the conflict between the Palestinians and the Zionist regime. This plan amounts to the withdrawal of the Zionists from the territories occupied in 1967, the return of Palestinian refugees, and the determination of the fate of Jerusalem. However, at the "Peace to Prosperity" economic workshop, which was held in Manama, Bahrain, on June 25-26, 2019, the United States proposed the principle of "money for peace" as the cornerstone of the Deal of the Century, replacing the principle of land for peace. According to this later principle, the United States claimed that by investing in the public and private sectors in the Palestinian territories, it would create at least one million jobs and invest \$27.5 billion in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, \$9.1 billion for Palestinians living in Egypt, \$7.4 billion for Palestinians living in Jordan, and \$6.3 billion for Palestinians living in Lebanon. Since the proposal favored Israel heavily, it was essentially dead on arrival, and we are now back to the earlier principle.

9. The acceptance of the cease-

fire by the Zionist regime showed that it could not best the combat, intelligence, security, missile, and drone capabilities of the resistance groups.

10. It has proved ineffective the political efforts of Israel and its allies to achieve peace as these efforts, unlike the cease-fire, do not grant Palestinian rights in the slightest.

11. This cease-fire showed that lasting peace and security cannot be established if Palestinians do not have their own independent state. Even Saudi Arabia has conditioned the normalization of its relations with Israel on the creation of an independent Palestinian state.

**Outlook of Gaza war**

It seems that the Gaza war will soon end; so will other regional conflicts that, following Israel's indiscriminate bombing in response to Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, also brought Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen, and Syria into the war. Direct military conflicts between Iran and Israel would ease or end for the short term as a result of the cease-fire. On the prospects of long-term regional peace, it has to be said that if Donald Trump continues to emphasize the normalization of Arab relations with Israel while the Arab governments continue to emphasize the prerequisite of establishing an independent Palestinian state for the normalization of relations, the achievements achieved in this cease-fire can pave the way for long-term regional peace.