

Feasibility study of 'Riviera of Middle East' plan

Is Trump bluffing
or aiming to reshape Palestine?By Sadeq
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EXCLUSIVE

Trump's proposed plan, commonly referred to as the "Riviera of the Middle East," is basically the expulsion of Palestinians from Gaza and the seizure of their lands. Riviera, for context, refers to certain coastal tourist and recreational areas and cities.

According to this plan, Palestinians are to be relocated to either Jordan or Egypt, and the lands of Gaza are to be transformed into a tourist area through long-term contracts with American companies. Trump claims this will include advanced infrastructure, luxury hotels, and economic development in Gaza.

The US president has spun the forced relocation of Gaza Strip residents as a solution for rebuilding Gaza. However, the plan has faced strong opposition from Arab and Islamic countries, with many viewing it as an act of ethnic cleansing. The implementation of this plan primarily depends on the complete evacuation of the Palestinian population from Gaza and the forced displacement of its residents to areas such as Jordan and Egypt. It would require at least two million Palestinians to leave their homes and settle in the mentioned countries, leading to significant consequences. This partly explains the opposition from regional countries, especially those two nations.

To examine the various dimensions of Trump's plan for the forced relocation of Gaza residents, its feasibility, and the consequences of its implementation, Iran Daily has conducted an exclusive interview with Mansour Barati, an expert on Middle Eastern and Israeli affairs. The full text of the interview follows.



Palestinians walk through the destruction caused by the Israeli air and ground offensive in Jabaliya, north of Gaza city, on January 19, 2025, after a cease-fire agreement between Israel and Hamas came into effect.

● ABED HAJJAR/AP

● Mansour Barati

IRAN DAILY: First, please provide your assessment of the implementation of Trump's proposed plan for Gazans. To what extent do you think such a plan is feasible?

BARATI: If we want to examine Trump's plan, known as the Riviera of the Middle East, we need to consider several points. First, the plan is very vague. So far, only a few interviews that Trump himself has given about the plan constitute its entirety. In other words, no document has been written yet that clearly and precisely outlines what is supposed to happen.

We can compare this plan to the previous plan Trump proposed in 2020 for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, known as the "Deal of the Cen-

ture". Although that plan was also very general and required negotiations and detailing, it was a plan for which a document had been written, and its objective was clear. However, the current plan is very vague. Another issue is that the same emphasis Trump previously placed on the forced relocation or migration of Gaza's Palestinian residents is present in this plan. Trump has announced that they want to build a Riviera in Gaza. Riviera was originally referred to an island in Italy where the world's super-rich spend part of their time vacationing there each year. Therefore, if such a plan is to be implemented in Gaza, it would require the construction of an ultra-luxurious area, which, in the first place, would necessitate a significant

reduction in Gaza's population because Gaza is a very densely populated area. Currently, in the Gaza Strip, we see a high population density, with approximately 2.3 million people living there. In such a densely populated area, implementing such a plan is unfeasible, and thus, to execute this plan, at least one million Gazans would need to leave.

Therefore, the next issue is the forced relocation of the population. Transferring such a population poses many problems and challenges, and the next question is where they could be relocated.

Trump has mentioned Jordan and Egypt for this relocation. How do you assess the potential transfer of Gazans to these two regions?

Would these two countries agree to such a thing?

First, let's talk about Jordan. In Jordan, the number of Palestinian refugees or asylum seekers already exceeds the number of Jordanians, and further increasing the Palestinian population in this country would be difficult for Jordan. The ruling authority in Jordan would be under severe security risk because we know that the political inclination of Gazans is either Islamist or Salafist, and ultimately, the number of Islamists in Gaza is much higher than secularists. This is while Jordan has had many conflicts with the Muslim Brotherhood in recent years. In the recent elections in Jordan, the Muslim Brotherhood managed to secure many seats in the Jordanian parliament as the leading party. Now, if a large number of Gazans were to be added to Jordan, this would pose a security risk for Jordan. After the aforementioned elections, the alarm has already been raised for the ruling authority and the Jordanian monarchy that Islamists are gaining too much power in Jordan. This threatens the survival of the political establishment in Jordan.

Therefore, Jordan fundamentally lacks the capacity to accommodate a large number of migrants from Gaza. During

King Abdullah II of Jordan's recent visit to Washington and his meeting with Trump, he initially said he agreed with the plan but ultimately stated that they could only accommodate two thousand patients for treatment. Thus, Jordanians are under significant security pressure in this regard.

The situation in Egypt is somewhat different. Egypt is a country with a population of 100 million, and even if one million people were added to its population, it wouldn't be very noticeable. However, they would still need to think daily about feeding and organizing these individuals. If Trump's plan is truly intended to be implemented and lead to the relocation of Gazans, its execution would require substantial financial allocations from the United States for the settlement and hosting of this population.

Would Egypt not face security risks with the migration of Gazans to this country?

Of course, if a large population of Gazans were to enter Egypt, Cairo would also face numerous problems in this regard. That is why Egyptians have so far reacted much more strongly to the implementation of this plan. In this context, a large number of Egyptian military forces have been sent to the Sinai Desert because Cairo believes that the entry of Gazans into Egypt would endanger the country's sovereignty and could violate the 1978 Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel. We saw that Egyptian President



In the case of Trump's current plan, the details of its implementation are non-existent. As for whether Trump is bluffing about raising such an issue, it is also unclear, but what is certain is that raising this plan has so far worked in favor of Netanyahu within Israel.



President of the Palestinian Authority Mahmoud Abbas holds a map of Israel and Palestine released as part of Trump's previous plan, dubbed "Deal of the Century," at the UN Security Council on February 11, 2020.

● AFP