



▲ A member of the Israeli Parliament, known as the Knesset, shakes hands with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (R) at the plenum hall in Al-Quds (Jerusalem) on July 17, 2024, after the Knesset voted overwhelmingly to pass a resolution rejecting the establishment of a Palestinian state.
● YONATAN SINDEL/FLASH90



▲ Palestinian mother sits with her malnourished son in the Al-Shati refugee camp, northern Gaza Strip, on July 23, 2025. Israel's long-time blockade has caused a famine in the enclave for months.
● OMAR AL-QATTAA/AFP

they may hold dual citizenship, but they prefer to stay put in their home countries rather than relocate and engage in settlement activity. Consequently, the flow of immigration has shifted toward Jews of Eastern origin.

The second development concerns demographics. The Eastern Jews who gradually made their way to Israel in previous decades have much higher birth rates. Demographically, their share of the population has been steadily on the rise, giving the social fabric of Israel an increasingly Eastern complexion. The Mizrahi Jews view the land of Palestine as utterly sacred; Not an inch of it, in their view, can be bartered or compromised. They hold on to a sanctified perception of this land, calling it “Eretz Israel,” or the historical land of Israel, in line with both their religious and Zionist narratives.

This social foundation has allowed Prime Minister Netanyahu to hold onto power for the longest premiership in Israel's history. The right-wing coalition has stayed in charge for nearly two decades — almost a quarter of a century. The Labor Party, once the country's founding political force and a pillar of Zionism, has been reduced to a mere shadow of its former self, holding just three seats out of 120 in the Knesset. The ruling bloc has no time for peace or compromise; It believes the entire land is theirs, leaving no room for negotiation.

The biggest obstacle to this plan or any other — just as in the case of the Oslo peace and two-state initiative — remains this same unyielding social base within Israel. Even the factions that once paid lip service to peace or the two-state solution have been pushed to the sidelines, becoming a marginal minority in Israel's political arena.

The pivotal question facing any peace initiative is whether there exists a genuine international will to bring pressure to bear on this social base within Israel to turn things around. Past experiences provide a clear answer. Initiatives like Oslo and similar efforts showed that when crises flare up, international actors, including the United States, jump in to patch things up — talking about peace, a two-state solution, and related issues. But once the dust settles down and the situation calms on the surface, everything is again swept under the rug and gets forgotten, largely because of internal resistance within Israeli society.

The difference between the Oslo process and the current situation lies in the fact that after October 7, 2023, Israel's conduct in the Gaza Strip sparked a worldwide awakening in public consciousness, and that same public opinion translated into mounting pressure on political leaders. Unprecedented developments took place, such as the issuance of arrest warrants for Netanyahu and other senior Israeli officials. How much can this new public mood — which even pushed European countries to admit that they must move toward the creation of an independent Palestinian state — weigh in on this analysis? On the other hand, there had been earlier pledges to normalize relations between Arab states and Israel — some of which had already been implemented before October 7 — until that day brought things to a halt. Can these two factors bring about a different outcome for this plan?

Not necessarily. Neither of these is new; Both go back to long historical precedents. Global public opinion has long stood behind the Palestinian cause and its people.

Not to this extent, though. Even opinion polls in the United States have changed. Yes, slightly. What's new is that, for the first time, public sentiment in the United States and parts of Europe has come out openly in favor of the Palestinians in their conflict with Israel. That's part of the shift we're witnessing. But in terms of overall impact, public opinion died down after the Oslo process. The issue was effectively declared closed as people were sold the illusion that the Palestinian cause was on its way to resolution. That atmosphere eventually faded away. This also coincided with broader global shifts — the end of the Cold War and the bipolar world order, which reshaped the international power structure and left its mark on global politics.

Coming back to your question, one of the major outcomes of October 7 — despite all the destruction, massacres, and atrocities committed against the Palestinians — is precisely this: The Palestinian issue, which after Oslo had effectively slipped off the radar and even among Arab and Muslim nations was no longer seen as a living cause, has now been brought back to life. Palestin-

ians had felt completely forgotten in a world rife with oppression and injustice, as though they were being written out of history. That feeling was one of the main driving forces behind Hamas and the broader Palestinian resistance's major operation on October 7.

Despite all the losses and suffering the Palestinians have endured, their greatest gain lies here: The Palestinian cause has once again been thrust onto the international stage and turned into a global concern — even if only superficially — for countries around the world, particularly in the West.

You mentioned why Israel accepted Trump's peace plan. On the other hand, the key question is: What made Hamas accept it? It's well known that the plan includes provisions such as the disarmament of Hamas and a clause preventing it from returning to political power. What, then, persuaded Hamas to go along with the plan — albeit conditionally?

The truth is, it's not that complicated. After two years of nonstop Israeli bombardment and atrocities, Hamas also felt accountable to its own people and didn't want to be blamed for prolonging the bloodshed. That's the main responsibility Hamas faced — one that carried both tactical and strategic weight. On the tactical side, it was about ensuring that Israel, not Hamas, got saddled with the blame for continued killing. For a movement with a clear political agenda, such perception matters greatly.

Strategically, the move also makes sense. The Palestinian people have demonstrated a

resistance that is truly exceptional in the modern history of humankind — standing up to mass killings with extraordinary endurance. Yet every society has its limits. The Palestinian nation needed a breather, a moment to catch its breath. Conditions had become unbearable, especially in recent months as famine was added to Israel's relentless bombardments and atrocities. The famine was not only inflicted directly, but also indirectly through the blockade and deliberate denial of essential goods like bread and flour. Such conditions took their toll, pushing Gazans to the brink of human endurance.

It was therefore natural for Hamas to take into account the strategic dimension of this reality as it remains responsible to its people and their national cause. The movement fought for two years, never threw in the towel, and put up unprecedented resistance, drawing upon the deep support and solidarity of its community. Still, this didn't erase its responsibility to its own people; It could not be seen as enabling the continuation of slaughter, famine, and suffering across Gaza. So, what did Hamas actually do? As you mentioned, it didn't accept the plan outright. Psychologically motivated, it decided to thank the US president and welcome his initiative. These gestures were reflected in Hamas's statement — perhaps also playing to Trump's personality, which is marked by a strong streak of narcissism and self-admiration. This symbolic gesture was more about form than substance.

In terms of substance, Hamas laid on the table what it actually held: Israeli captives and the

bodies of Israelis killed during the bombings. It declared its readiness to hand over both the living and the dead. Searches are still underway to locate remaining bodies, which has now turned into one of Israel's pretexts for continued accusations. In return, Hamas demanded the release of Palestinian prisoners — a central goal behind capturing Israelis in the first place. Around a thousand Palestinian prisoners were exchanged, including nearly 200 serving long-term or life sentences.

Over a year ago, Hamas had already announced its willingness to hand over administration of Gaza to an agreed Palestinian arrangement — a national formula, technocratic or otherwise. In colloquial terms, it was, as they say, “making a virtue of necessity” since Hamas had already made the same proposal before. Once again, it reiterated this position in its acceptance statement, expressing readiness to pass on Gaza's governance to a joint Palestinian framework.

However, once the plan reached later stages — questions about Gaza's future, disarmament, Palestinian statehood, and the international presence of foreign forces as outlined in Trump's proposal — Hamas's statement deferred all such matters to Palestinian national consensus. It essentially said these matters were beyond its authority and therefore steered clear of engaging directly, leaving them to collective Palestinian decision-making. But as we well know, achieving such internal consensus among Palestinian factions is easier said than done.

The full interview first appeared in Persian on IRNA.



▲ A Palestinian man released from Israeli prisons is greeted by a relative upon arrival by bus in front of Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis, southern Gaza Strip, on October 13, 2025, after the first phase of cease-fire between Israel and Hamas was implemented.
● ABDELRAHMAN RASHAD/AFP

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