

# Unmasking Five Myths: Gaza, the Trump Plan, and the EU's Politics of Illusion

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**BUILDING RESILIENCE IN THE SOUTH SERIES – ANALYSIS**

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## INTRODUCTION

As they reflect on the future of Palestine and Palestinians, European Union policymakers must be clear-eyed about the many weaknesses and flaws in the so-called “Trump Plan” for Gaza, which they – along with the United Nations Security Council – endorsed on November 17, 2025. Although EU policymakers may find it tempting to retreat into a make-believe world of self-soothing narratives on Israel and Palestine, engaging in such magical thinking will not only lead to self-defeating outcomes but further erode the EU’s relevance and credibility in the Middle East and on the global stage.

The EU must therefore move forward with the planned sanctions against Israel—which have been halted since the ceasefire—because now is not the time to back down but to maintain pressure. The sanctions are not symbolic: they include suspending Israel’s preferential trade status under the EU–Israel Association Agreement, applying WTO-level tariffs on key exports, freezing bilateral cooperation and access to EU research programs, and implementing targeted measures against senior Israeli officials and violent settlers. Let’s also not forget that many EU states continue to send weapons to Israel, making them complicit in the ongoing genocide in Gaza and the ethnic cleansing in the West Bank.

Here are five pitfalls to avoid:

## **1- MYTH: GAZA: “WE NOW HAVE A CEASEFIRE IN GAZA.”**

No, we do not. A ceasefire in law and diplomacy means a suspension of hostilities and protection of civilians. This is certainly not the case in Gaza where Israeli forces are still carrying out daily raids, sniper fire, air and drone strikes that kill civilians, including children. Israel’s unrelenting large-scale bombardment may have paused but ongoing demolitions, enforcement of depopulated areas, and targeted attacks mean that Gazans are still in the grip of the threat of imminent death and violence.

Additionally, a real ceasefire would be coupled with full, safe, and sustained humanitarian access. In Gaza, relief is still heavily restricted, with limited entry points, arbitrary security procedures, and frequent re-closures. The onset of winter has meant even more daily suffering for people who have to queue for hours for bread or water. The cold weather has further aggravated malnutrition among Palestinian children.

Additionally, let’s be clear: while attention focuses on Gaza, Israel has escalated ethnic cleansing in the West Bank through intensified settler attacks, which are driving Palestinians from villages, grazing land, and agricultural areas while military closures and roadblocks that make daily life impossible.

## **2- MYTH: ISRAEL SHOULD NOT BE HELD FINANCIALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR REBUILDING GAZA.**

International law is unequivocal: states found responsible for unlawful destruction are obliged to provide reparations. Israel’s bombardment of civilian infrastructure, including homes, hospitals, universities, water networks and more, is unprecedented in scale, documented in real time, and recognised by global legal bodies. Any reconstruction plan that does not place financial responsibility squarely on Israel’s shoulders perpetuates the same structural impunity that enabled this catastrophe.

Europe, which prides itself on its rules-based order, cannot keep shielding Israeli leaders from accountability. In fact, the reality is that for decades, the EU and its member states have demanded financial compensation from Israel for destroying infrastructure funded by European taxpayers, including schools, health clinics, solar panels, housing units, water systems, often built via the European Commission, UNRWA, or UNICEF.

The practice seems to have continued over the years. In 2017, France, Ireland, Belgium, and Sweden publicly [supported](#) the EU's compensation claims. Former European Commissioner for Crisis Management Janez Lenarčič [confirmed](#) in January 2023 that the EU had "repeatedly requested that Israel return or compensate for EU-funded assets that have been demolished, dismantled, or confiscated". The fact that such a demand for compensation is no longer on the EU agenda is yet another sign of the many ways in which the EU has contributed to the normalisation of a cycle in which Israel destroys and the international community pays for rebuilding.

### **3- MYTH: ONLY WESTERN MEDIA CAN TELL THE TRUE STORY OF GAZA.**

It is important that Israel allows foreign journalists into Gaza but let us not forget the heroic role, courage and persistence of Palestinian reporters – many of whom have lost their lives – during Israel's two-year-long genocidal assault on Gaza. As of late 2025, various press freedom organizations report that over 200 to 270 Palestinian journalists have been killed in Gaza in the last two years, with the vast majority of these deaths occurring since October 7, 2023. This makes the conflict the deadliest for media workers since records began.

Foreign journalism certainly has its place in covering the devastation of Gaza and the violence in the West Bank but it cannot replace Palestinian knowledge, experience and emotion. Unfortunately, much too often, Western media outlets, historically shaped by Eurocentric mindsets, have either followed Israel's talking points or constructed narratives through a patronising "colonial gaze" which devalues Palestinians, their history and their demands. As Gazan journalist Motaz Azaiza put it, shortly before being forced into exile: "We are not just footage. We are people. If we don't tell our own story, the world hears only half of it."

### **4- MYTH: GAZA IS SLIPPING INTO A CIVIL WAR, AND THE VIOLENCE THERE IS "INTERNAL," NOT INFLUENCED BY ISRAEL.**

There is no sudden civil war in Gaza. The clashes between Hamas and other armed groups are happening against the backdrop of years of military intervention, occupation, and Israeli support for militias. Many reports, including those by [mainstream Western media](#), indicate Israel has armed and supported militias in Gaza, especially since the genocide started in October 2023. For example, the

Popular Forces [have said they work with the Israeli army](#). These groups reportedly operate in areas under Israeli control, especially Rafah, and have received assault rifles said to be from Israel. Aid looting and the so-called 'security vacuum' [have also been linked to these Israeli-backed groups](#). While some blame Gaza's problems on internal collapse or crime, many experts say criminal gangs carry out aid theft under Israeli supervision. This challenges the idea that Gaza's problems are exclusively internal and suggests that outside intervention created the vacuum and uses proxy groups.

Widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure, like water systems, hospitals, and power grids, also fuels civil war. Israel has caused and continues to cause this destruction.

The violence is not simply Palestinian groups fighting each other or random unrest. It is part of a larger strategy. As long as Israel controls important areas and supports armed Palestinian groups, clashes will continue and might lead to an actual civil war, something that has happened with Western interventions in various parts of the Global South before. Like direct attacks, forced displacement, and the ongoing blockade, the violence and hardship in Gaza are shaped by Israeli policy, not by a sudden breakdown within Palestinian society.

## **5- MYTH: THE TRUMP PLAN IS TRULY A "PEACE PLAN."**

The Trump Plan does not provide a real path to peace. Instead, it keeps a system in place that denies Palestinians sovereignty, territorial continuity, and basic rights. UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese has said that any plan that allows annexation or reduces self-determination is not peace but ongoing dispossession. Albanese warns that the Plan repeats actions international law forbids: taking land by force, replacing populations, and creating enclaves without control over borders or movement.

Though presented as practical, the Plan makes apartheid-like conditions seem normal. Palestinians are offered a patchwork 'state' under Israeli control, without East Jerusalem or the right of return. These proposals break international law and cannot bring peace because they ignore what Palestinians have gone through. Peace based on force is not real peace. It only perpetuates oppression and might lead to the same conditions that led to October 7. Palestinians have already given up too much for a so-called 'return to normal.'

## About the BIC

The BIC is an independent, non-profit, think-and-do tank based in the capital of Europe that is committed to developing solutions to address the cyclical drivers of insecurity, economic fragility, and conflict the Middle East and North Africa. Our goal is to bring added value to the highest levels of political discourse by bringing systemic issues to the forefront of the conversation.

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This project assesses multilateral measures being implemented by institutions such as the United Nations and the European Union and aims to find more effective policy to end conflict and foster sustainable political solutions.

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