



Maria Luisa Fantappiè

➤ How Italy and the Gulf Can Help Achieve Durable Peace in Gaza*

- In the context of Trump's plan for Gaza, Italy can leverage its good relations with the US, Gulf states and Israel to sustain the ceasefire and advance Hamas demobilisation.
- Italy and Gulf partners should coordinate to facilitate the creation of legitimate Palestinian governance mechanisms and the reconstruction process, preventing Gaza's fragmentation and reinforcing regional stability.
- Leveraging its peacekeeping experience, Rome should rally European support for a UN mandate enabling an International Stabilisation Force that upholds Palestinian sovereignty and ensures peace implementation.



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At this crucial time, Italy has a role in “holding the hand of the United States” to do the right thing and bring about the implementation of all the parts of the [October 2025 Gaza ceasefire] deal, steering the ambiguous sections in the right direction.¹

Trump's twenty-point plan for Gaza surely has many shortcomings – especially in detailing the schedule of implementation and its formulation around the sovereignty and governance of Palestine. Yet it also holds opportunities, including with regard to Italy's possible increased cooperation with members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in guaranteeing the preservation of the ceasefire, reconstruction and governance efforts that are needed for a durable peace. The Italian government's special relationship with the US administration, the consolidated ties with Gulf countries and continued dialogue with Israel all place Rome in a favourable position to positively contribute to the plan while also shaping and securing a broader European role in the process. This may unfold along three parallel tracks: accompanying the demobilisation process, catalysing synergies on governance and reconstruction, as well as supporting adequate actions in the Security Council.

¹ Author's interview with an adviser to a MENA state.

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Accompanying demobilisation

The ceasefire brokered through Trump's plan remains as fragile as the overall trust between the parties in conflict. The exchange of Israeli hostages in the hands of Hamas against Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails remains uncompleted. Some of the bodies of dead hostages have still to be handed over. Should this not be fulfilled in the short term, Israeli authorities have already stated that they are prepared to return to war.

Meanwhile, plans for the disarmament of Hamas militants and the definition of their role in post-war Gaza remain fluid. Israel distrusts Turkey and Qatar – the regional powers with the largest influence over Hamas leadership – and fears that they may push for a continued role of Hamas in the strip under the guise of new governance and police authorities – to which Israel is firmly opposed. Divergence on Hamas's demobilisation risks becoming a stumbling block that holds back negotiations on other crucial files (flows of humanitarian aid; ceasefire in Gaza; post-war governance reconstruction), is already hampering return of humanitarian aid to the strip and may set the stage for a return to a medium intensity confrontation in the strip.

Still, so far, thanks to US pressures, the ceasefire is holding, and all parties have moderated their posture. Notably, Doha has played an important role in pushing Hamas's politburo elements to agree to the ceasefire plan and considers it crucial as the starting point towards a clear, step-by-step decommission plan. The latter includes granting amnesty for Hamas veterans in return for their handing over weapons and leaving the strip, as well as demobilising middle ranks and fresh recruits under a police authority integrated within the Palestinian Authority (PA) police ranks.

Italy can help Washington in its endeavour to uphold a truce in the hostilities. Its role as a neutral third party in the discussion that has strong ties to the US, as well as to Qatar and Gulf states, and maintains open channels to Israel, could be leveraged to partner with and support the United States in moderating and mediating between the parties, engaging with those counterparts that are less maximalists and more ready to compromise on the demilitarisation plan and the decommissioning of Hamas members. Track II diplomacy with Qatar and Turkey and, in the meantime, consultations with Israel could bolster Italy's role as a player in Middle East politics and, in parallel, advance prospects for peace.

Synergies on governance and reconstruction

Discussions on post-war reconstruction and governance are where Italy's roles and synergies with the Gulf countries have the greatest potential to deliver results. The composition and role of the "Board of Peace" (point 9 of the twenty-point plan)² that should be headed by Trump and heads of state is yet to be defined. According to the plan, the board should supervise a Palestinian

² Rapid Response 47, "President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict", X post, 29 September 2025, <https://x.com/RapidResponse47/status/1972726021196562494>.



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committee made up of handpicked 'apolitical technocrats' which, in the hopes of Israel's current government, should be dependable and may potentially even challenge, if not replace, the PA. In this respect, there is a concrete risk that, as a technocratic and weak body of governance settles in, Hamas's cells will continue to operate in Gaza. This, in turn, would pose the conditions for a prolonged presence of the IDF in the strip, continued bloc of humanitarian aid and return to low and mid-intensity war and declining prospects for Palestinian effective governance of their own land.

Gulf countries fear this outcome. Their approach is instead to focus on including talented Palestinian leaders – part of the PA's new generations, business people and civil society activists – early on into the picture. Saudi Arabia in particular, which has led the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-States Solution initiative, is particularly committed to ensuring that PA be involved in governance as soon as possible – without conditioning such inclusion on the completion of its internal reform. Turning a crisis into an opportunity, the reconstruction and governance in Gaza could indeed be the very opportunity for PA to jumpstart an internal reform process.

Concerns by Arab and Gulf states are also hovering over a potential partition of the Gaza strip to be governed and administered in autonomy from the West Bank, as this will further undermine steps towards Palestinian sovereignty and effective Palestinian governance. In effect, as many have pointed out, it was precisely that split between Gaza and the West Bank, alongside a dormant and ineffective PA, that was among the root causes of the consolidation of Hamas and 7 October operations. While conservative and extreme far-right fringes of the Knesset see annexation and divide and rule as the right formula for fulfilling the messianic and security goals of Israel, Gulf states argue that an effective Palestinian governance is instead the best guarantee for Israel's own security.

Against this backdrop, Italy has a role to play in this in at least two different respects:

- Leveraging strong ties with members of the GCC, launching – and if needed leading – a consultation process with regional partners, above all Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Turkey, Jordan and Egypt, to “push the right people into the room”³ to ensure that Palestinian governance over the strip is effectively advanced through the committee instead of turning it into a mere proxy-entity lacking legitimacy and capabilities on the ground. Tangible advances in defining Palestinian governance of the strip could help make the ceasefire work, building overall trust between the parties and advancing the negotiations over the exchange of prisoners/hostage bodies, issues of disarmament notwithstanding.
- As far as reconstruction efforts are concerned, Saudi Arabia has a crucial role to play in light of the economic and political capital that will be needed to ensure a fair reconstruction and governance in the post-war period. “Palestine is for the Kingdom much more than something we care for as Arab and Muslims. It is an issue of national

³ Author's interview with an adviser to a MENA state.



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security. Not sorting it out could give our rivals, Iran in particular, an advantage point”.⁴ In particular, Saudi Arabia and Italy could partner together to facilitate and boost reconstruction and its governance by hosting a joint Forum for Reconstruction in Riyadh where international companies, alongside Palestinian businesspeople, are brought together to discuss reconstruction and future governance. Furthermore, Israel will welcome a more important role for Saudi Arabia and the UAE in defining governance of the strip to balance the influence of Turkey and Qatar.

Actions in the Security Council

Finally, Italy also has an important role in mobilising European member states support for a UN Security Council Resolution providing a clear framework for the deployment of the International Stabilisation Force (ISF) mentioned in the plan. While not a member of the UN Security Council, Italy remains one of the most experienced players in peacekeeping operations such as that envisioned for the ISF. Building on past experience, it will be crucial that any UN Security Council resolution provides the ISF with a clear mandate that does not deny or challenge the legitimate claim of sovereignty of Palestinians over the strip.

⁴ Author's interview with a Saudi Arabia interlocutor, October 2025.

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Via dei Montecatini, 17
I-00186 Rome, Italy
T +39 06 6976831
www.iai.it



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