

## **On Israel's Plans to Deport Palestinians from Gaza by Force<sup>2</sup>**

### **1. The End of the Gaza Strip War for Israel – Defeat of HAMAS and Deportation of Palestinians**

The government of Benjamin Netanyahu does not consider the war with Hamas in the Gaza Strip to be over. The ceasefire that took effect in January 2025, however, was not a harbinger of long-term peace.

In any war, the conflicting parties often agree to a temporary truce to resolve local and tactical issues (for example, to obtain a peaceful respite to replenish the arsenal, accumulate and redeploy forces, resolve higher-priority military and diplomatic tasks that ultimately contribute to the achievement of complete victory, etc.).

Taking advantage of the truce, Israel redeployed its forces to its northern border with Lebanon to execute Operation “Arrows of the North” (October 1 - November 27, 2024). This operation aimed to dismantle Hezbollah's military infrastructure and weaponry. Simultaneously, Israel sought to strengthen its position on the eastern border with Syria following the overthrow of Bashar al-Assad's regime in December 2024, an event in which Israel played a role. These actions were intended to shift the focus of pro-Palestinian forces towards other potential conflict zones.

As a result, Iran suffered significant losses in Lebanon and Syria. Turkey, which constantly raised the level of its anti-Israeli rhetoric with initiatives to resolve the Palestinian issue found itself drawn into the Syrian crisis. For R. Erdogan today, maintaining the puppet regime of Ahmed al-Sharaa in Damascus is much more pressing than the topic of resolving the Palestinian issue with the support of Hamas.

In the south, Israeli interests, particularly the merchant fleet, face a continuing threat from pro-Iranian Yemeni Houthi groups. These groups periodically launch missile attacks against Tel Aviv and have effectively blocked passage from the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden by controlling the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. The latest Houthi missile attack on Israel's Ben-Gurion Airport is an example of this.

Despite being one of the most economically and technologically advanced countries in the Middle East, and ranking 29th in the world in terms of GDP, Israel's military-industrial complex will not be able to supply its army with a sufficient amount of weapons and military equipment in case of a long war. Thus, after the start of the Hamas aggression of October 7, 2023 – September 2024, the United States spent almost \$18 (17.9) billion on military

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<sup>1</sup> Doctor of Political Sciences, PhD in Legal Sciences, Professor. Graduated from the Faculty of History at Saratov State University named after N. G. Chernyshevsky. Historian, political scientist, expert in conflict studies, politics, and security. His research interests include Turkology, Iranian studies, Armenian studies (including the Karabakh issue), and Caucasian studies. Author of the fundamental scientific monograph *“Pan-Turkism in Turkey's Geostrategy in the Caucasus”*, as well as hundreds of scientific and analytical articles published in various journals.

<sup>2</sup> The article was submitted to the editor on May 8, 2025.

assistance to Israel, which became an unprecedented sum in the entire history of American-Israeli military-technical cooperation.

In other words, the war in the Gaza Strip absorbed significant Israeli resources, therefore, in order to conduct a “second front” on the Lebanese or Syrian and Yemeni directions, Tel Aviv needed a respite (truce) in the south of the country. Otherwise, the “dispersion of forces” in all areas of hostilities (the war with Hamas in the Gaza Strip, Hezbollah in Lebanon and Syria, not to mention the Houthis in Yemen) could lead to dire consequences for Israel itself.

Moreover, the Israeli General Staff’s tactics of “*small victorious wars*” always remain in their minds and serve the interests of the ruling circles. B. Netanyahu understood that the unfinished war with Hamas, the incomplete liberation of Israeli hostages held by Palestinians, and the security problems of its northern population caused protests among Israelis and negatively affected both the reputation of the prime minister and the ruling “*Likud*” bloc in the Knesset. Accordingly, the Israeli Army military successes in Lebanon and the subsequent occupation of the “*security zone*” in the Golan Heights in Syria following the fall of the al-Assad regime allowed B. Netanyahu and his party to restore their shaky rating and gain 25 seats in parliament.

With the U.S. President Donald Trump’s return to the White House, Israel expects not only to increase American military assistance, but also to involve Washington in a joint campaign against Tehran under the guise of destroying the Iranian “*nuclear dossier*” and to resolve the crisis in Israeli-Turkish relations over Syria. Accordingly, the concentration of American sea and air fleets in the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean could help eliminate the Houthi threat in Yemen. However, since Donald Trump has a habit of combining populism with pragmatism, the United States is still focused on a political settlement of relations with Iran and Turkey through negotiations.

Also, the United States at this stage is not interested in Israel’s “hot war” with Iran, much less with NATO member Turkey. Tel Aviv is moving the front of the confrontation with Tehran into the plane of subversive activities of foreign intelligence agencies with the aim of provoking the Islamic Republic to retaliate in order to disrupt negotiations with the United States. This is indirectly evidenced by the recently more frequent acts of sabotage (explosions and arson) in Iran, particularly in the port city of Bandar Abbas and the suburbs of Tehran and Mashhad.

On the Turkish track, Israel does not recognize the al-Sharaa regime, continues the tactics of targeted military strikes on the military installations of the Syrian Arab Republic, supposedly in order to secure its territory from the unpredictable Sunni extremists actions. Israel also tries to justify its aggressive actions in Syria by considerations of protecting the local minorities (in particular, the Druze) from the tyranny of the pro-Turkish regime.

In Yemen, Tel Aviv managed to convince its main ally to conduct a series of joint massive airstrikes on Houthi targets, which, according to D. Trump, forced the latter to capitulate to the Americans, although the Yemenis themselves deny this. In response to the missile attack on Ben-Gurion International Airport, the Israeli Air Force launched bombing attacks on the Yemeni capital Sana’a (in particular, the airport) and the port city of Hodeidah with the United States’ agreement.

Meanwhile, Tel Aviv obtained public endorsement from the U.S. President D. Trump for a plan to mass relocate Gaza's 2 million Arab inhabitants effectively deporting them. The proposal envisioned transforming the Gaza Strip into a kind of global tourism hub under U.S. protection. American businesses would contribute to creating a prosperous zone within Israeli territory.

In the truce and ceasefire reached with Hamas, Israel reserved the right to resume hostilities in the Gaza Strip if the other side does not release all Israeli hostages, and Hamas "*will not stop provocations*". In fact, Tel Aviv still has formal reasons to restart military operations in the Gaza Strip.

According to the "*Voice of Turkey*" edition, citing Israeli media reports, Benjamin Netanyahu's government has approved a plan to expand the operation and full occupation of the sector. At the same time, Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich announced the need to occupy the Gaza Strip and expel its entire population<sup>3</sup>.

Thus, Israel is preparing to expand its offensive in the Gaza Strip aiming to eliminate Hamas, free its hostages and deport Palestinians from the territory. The government has approved the corresponding IDF ground operation, which could begin after the end of U.S. President Donald Trump's Middle East tour in the second half of May<sup>4</sup>.

In this regard, there has been a recent surge in public demands for the return of hostages from the Gaza Strip to Israel. In response the army is being replenished with tens of thousands of reservists, with reports indicating that the number has already surpassed 60,000. In the event of an offensive ground operation, Israel will allegedly undertake measures aimed at ensuring security, yet in reality, these actions will likely serve to displace the civilian population from the Gaza Strip to the border with Egypt. Furthermore, Israel is expected to impede the delivery of humanitarian aid to the exclave, identify and carry out massive attacks on the infrastructure and command posts of militants, and finally neutralize any remnants of Hamas.

As noted by the U.S. House of Representatives member Rashida Tlaib, the State of Israel has maintained blockade the Gaza Strip for a period exceeding two months, impeding the flow of humanitarian supplies, thereby trying to break the Palestinians' will to resist and establish advantageous conditions for themselves to conduct a military operation<sup>5</sup>.

The current situation in the Gaza Strip evokes parallels with the events that transpired in Nagorno-Karabakh in 2023. Specifically, – the 9-month transport blockade of the Lachin corridor by Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh transpired in full view of the international community (including Russian peacekeepers and the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group). This blockade preceded the subsequent blitz assault of the Azerbaijani armed forces, which resulted in the capture of the entire Nagorno-Karabakh and the mass deportation of over 100,000 Armenians. It may seem as if both scenarios were compiled at one center.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://t.me/voice\\_of\\_turkey/11725](https://t.me/voice_of_turkey/11725) (download date: 06.05.2025).

<sup>4</sup> [https://t.me/voice\\_of\\_turkey/117254](https://t.me/voice_of_turkey/117254) (download date: 06.05.2025).

<sup>5</sup> <https://t.me/bagramyan26/77213> (download date: 06.05.2025).

An important question to pose is what the near future holds for the 2 million Arab population of the Gaza Strip? And where should they go to the south, to the border of Egypt, when Cairo itself does not want to accept 2 million Palestinians?

It is no coincidence that 12 years later, Turkey and Egypt, having renewed their partnership, began to conduct joint military exercises (for example, with the Air Force in Pakistan in October 2024 and Special Forces units in Ankara in May 2025). Turkey's efforts are focused on the prevention of a mass crossing of the Israeli-Egyptian border by Palestinian refugees and the prevention of the deportation of civilians.

Indeed, it is challenging to solve such a humanitarian catastrophe with the assistance of border guards and special forces alone. It is evident that the mass deportation of Palestinians by Israel will only be impeded if Turkey were to launch a decisive military offensive against Israel. Such an attack would necessitate the utilization of both the Turkish army and navy, and would serve as a deterrent to further Israeli aggression.

However, Erdogan's menacing nature does not negate his cautious nature. Turkey hardly wants to spoil relations with the United States because of Palestinian refugees, since the conflict with Israel guarantees Ankara negative financial consequences from global Jewish capital and lobbying structures. In any case, Turkey expects to reach a compromise with Israel in Syria, with the assistance of the United States.

As a result of the war with Hamas in the Gaza Strip, the Israeli Defense Forces killed at least 50 thousand Palestinians. And these losses were the result of hostilities initiated by the Palestinians themselves, led by Hamas. If Tel Aviv is determined to completely occupy the Gaza Strip with the deportation of the 2 million Palestinian population with the motivation of eliminating the threat of extremism and terrorism, then the total destruction of so many people, including civilians, will not only be a disgrace to the Jewish state, but also to the rest of the civilized world.

Israel has a profound recollection of its tragic history of the Holocaust and the bloody Armenian Genocide. Under the guise of evacuating civilians from a war zone, Israel will actually forcefully deport Palestinians. The world has forgotten the tragedy of Armenian refugees in the Syrian deserts of Deir ez-Zor during the First World War. And today the global community has demonstrated indifference to the mass deportation of more than 100,000 Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh.

On August 22, 1939, at his headquarters in Obersalzberg – a week before Germany attacked Poland and the start of World War II, Hitler, concluding his speech to the Wehrmacht command, noted: *“Who now remembers the extermination of the Armenians?”*<sup>6</sup>. Apparently, B. Netanyahu holds the same opinion regarding the Palestinians and will claim that for a long time he appealed to different countries to accept Palestinian refugees and give them asylum (allegedly, Israel, unlike Ottoman Turkey, demonstrated *“humanism”*). It is not his fault that the same countries of the Arab East, Turkey, Iran, Indonesia, Brazil, Canada, France, Spain, Italy, Ukraine and other countries have turned their backs on the Palestinians).

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<sup>6</sup> [https://military-history.fandom.com/wiki/The\\_Obersalzberg\\_Speech#cite\\_note-1](https://military-history.fandom.com/wiki/The_Obersalzberg_Speech#cite_note-1) (download date: 08.05.2025).

## **2. Possible International Reaction on Israel's Policy of Palestinian Deportation**

The idea of Israeli radicals to organize the deportation of the indigenous population from the Gaza Strip did not find widespread support in the international community. Ardent opponents of this prospect of resolving the Palestinian issue in the Gaza Strip are Iran, Turkey, the countries of the Arab East and other representatives of the Islamic world. Mass ethnic deportation in the 21st century did not find understanding and support not only in the Islamic world, but also among many Christian countries (in particular, Russia, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Brazil, etc.) and international organizations (including the UN). The late Pope Francis was also opposed to the deportation of the population from the Gaza Strip, which caused a critical reaction in Israel.

Some sources even tried to connect the death of Francis with the sabotage action of the Israeli Mossad (allegedly, the Jews poisoned the Pope for his categorical attitude towards the “Trump Plan” on the deportation of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip). Taking into account the status of the Pope, his opinion may differ from many actors in the world community. What should Armenians do if the Vatican condones Azerbaijani falsifications and destruction of the Christian material culture of Armenian Karabakh?

Meanwhile, it cannot be said that the international community is demonstrating determination in preventing the expulsion of the autochthonous population from the Gaza Strip. For example, Egypt is wary of opposing the U.S. President Trump's plan to deport Palestinians. Bahrain, Jordan and Qatar take a similar position.

None of the above-mentioned states in the Arab East really wants to accept Palestinian refugees *en masse* based on economic and internal political considerations. In particular, this forced mass migration will have a heavy impact and become a socio-economic burden on local budgets, and the emergence of a critical mass can undermine confidence in the authorities themselves. At the same time, there is an understanding that the exodus of the Palestinian population from the Gaza Strip will lead to the final Israeli occupation of this part of Palestine.

Azerbaijan, being a strategic partner of Israel, interested in the continuation of Israeli military supplies and obliged to Tel Aviv for assistance in the 44-day war of 2020 in Nagorno-Karabakh, is unlikely to “revolt” against the policy of deporting fellow-Muslims from Gaza and will limit itself to a declarative statement calling for compliance with international law. Baku is most likely interested in obtaining permission from Tel Aviv and Washington to participate in a business project for restoring the destroyed Gas Strip in the post-war period.

The UK will not repeat France's position in condemning Israel for the deportation of Palestinians, and together with the United States will stop anti-Israeli meetings and resolutions by the international organizations (primarily the UN).

Russia and China will obviously limit themselves to publicly condemning the deportation policy and calling for dialogue, negotiations and political consultations, and may demand the convening of an extraordinary meeting of the UN Security Council to adopt

another resolution. But we can hardly expect more serious steps against Israel from Moscow and Beijing.

Perhaps the plans of Israel and the United States provide for the mass deportation of Palestinians from Gaza to the territory of the loser Ukraine in the status of labor migrants for the time being to restore the destroyed economy. And during the military conflict, almost 10 million people left Ukraine, so how can Kyiv compensate for its labor resources? The geography of Ukraine, at the suggestion of the administration of peacemaker D. Trump appeared on the list of possible countries of “*temporary resettlement*” of Palestinians from Gaza.

It is hardly possible to imagine that any country would begin hostilities against Israel for its operation in the Gaza Strip with the subsequent displacement of local Palestinians. Iran today is not able to defeat Israel alone, which enjoys the unconditional support of the United States. Turkey is most notable for its “verbal threats” against Israel and warnings from its fighter jets, but will not cross “red lines” because of the United States.

All this gives Israel reason to believe that the international community will do nothing more than public denials, statements, protests and resolutions against the Jewish state. Accordingly, the liquidation of Hamas in the Gaza Strip with the forceful expulsion of the civilian population may become a *fait accompli*.

Thus, Israel does not abandon the idea of ethnic cleansing of the Gaza Strip. The peaceful path of resettlement is not accepted by the Palestinian side and the majority of the international community. In the current conditions, Tel Aviv is relying on a military method to resolve the issue.

The history of international relations shows that the tragedy of genocide (deportation), which is a violent state policy against an ethnic (or religious) group, can only be prevented by the use of adequate force. If Nazi Germany had not lost the war in May 1945, the Germans would never have admitted responsibility for the Holocaust of the Jews. True, Ottoman Turkey also lost the war in 1918, but the Turks never recognized the Armenian Genocide, since the “great powers” held contradictory positions in resolving the Armenian case. It is no coincidence that Israeli expert Arkady Dubnov, commenting on the tragedy of the Armenians in Karabakh, again recalled that the defeat of the Armenian side in 2020 and 2023 was the result of a conflict of interests of the key global players.