FROM PROPOSAL TO REALITY: IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES OF THE TRUMP GAZA PEACE INITIAIVE IN A FRAGMENTED PALESTINIAN POLITY

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Abstract

Research Problem: *The Trump Gaza Peace Initiative also known as the 20-point Gaza Peace plan, despite being comprehensive and ambitious in scope may encounter considerable obstacle to itssuccessful implementation due to the deeply fragmented nature of the Palestinian polity. The enduring political division between Hamas in Gaza and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank undermines unified governance which in turn threatens the feasibility of translating the peace proposal into a sustainable reality.*

Objectives: *The study aims toexamine how internal divisions may hamper the peace plan implementation and as well analyse broader implications for sustainable peace in the region.*

Methodology: *A qualitative research design is employed, utilizing primary and secondary data sourced from media reports, official statements, journal articles, and policy papers. Content analysis was applied to systematically interpret and evaluate the narratives surrounding the implementation obstacles posed by Palestinian internal division.*

Results: *Findings reveal how political fragmentation could significantly underminegovernance coherence and weaken institutional capacity, thereby creating substantial barriers to the successful peace plan implementation. The absence of actionable mechanisms for political reconciliation within the peace framework exacerbates mistrust and limits unified Palestinian engagement. Additionally, socio-economic challenges and external geopolitical pressures may further complicate the realisation of the initiative's objectives.*

Conclusion: *The study concludes that without addressing the internal political divisions within the Palestinian polity, the Trump Gaza Peace Deal risks remaining an aspirational proposal rather than a practical roadmap for peace. This is because sustainable conflict resolution in the Palestinian region requires prioritizing Palestinian political unity alongside economic and security measures.*

Key Contribution to Knowledge: *This research contributes to the understanding of how intra-Palestinian political fragmentation critically shapes the prospects of externally mediated peace initiatives. It highlights the necessity of integrating political reconciliation mechanisms into peace frameworks to enhance their viability and effectiveness.*

Recommendations: *The study recommends that for theon-going peace initiative to be successfully implemented without hitting a brick wall like its predecessors, there is a need to incorporate actionable strategies for Palestinian political reconciliation and institutional integration in the peace plan. International actors should also encourage inclusive dialogue processes that bridge internal divides, thereby fostering a unified Palestinian front essential for successful peace implementation.*

Introduction

In contemporary world politics, the Israel-Palestine dispute remains one of the most delicate and contentious issues and has influenced global perceptions of justice, security, and identity. The conflict's antecedent dates back to the pre-colonial era where the territory known today as Israel and Palestine were part of the Ottoman Empire for several centuries spanning from 1516 to its defeat during the First World War in 1917 (Biger, 2008). The creation of the state of Israel on May 14, 1948, marked the height of the violent escalation which garnered widespread criticisms with the conflict incorporating other Arab states and, to a large extent, the Western World and have in turn altered the fate of the Palestinian nation till this very day (Gelvin, 2020)

Notwithstanding the escalating series of conflict in the region, numerous efforts have been put in place to bring about the end of the conflict. Among these, is the Trump Gaza Peace Initiative, encapsulated in a comprehensive 20-point Gaza Peace plan which represents a significant yet contentious attempt to address the complex realities of the Gaza Strip and the broader Palestinian polity. The initiative, unveiled amid a highly polarized regional and international context on September 29, 2025 at the white house, sought to offer a viable framework for peace and stability by addressing security, governance, economic development, and political reconciliation (White House, 2025).

However, the transition from proposal to tangible implementation has given room to contentious debates. As much as the proposal appears to be more specific-driven and desperately needed at this crucial time to bring about the immediate end of the violent conflict in the region, scholars like Bukahri (2025) views the Peace deal as a structural alteration of the world order which has a high tendency of marginalizing traditional mediators. While Amza (2025) attested to the bold, well-detailed and comprehensive nature of the proposal, his skepticism lies on the viability of the peace deal which wasn't explicitly spelt out.

In spite of how relatively new the peace proposal is and the implementation at its infancy, existing literature on the subject matter focuses more onthe general perception and its implications for the peace initiative than it does on the fragmented nature of the Palestinian polity, which significantly undermined the Palestinian authority's ability to be carried along during the peace proposal process. In light of this, the study intends to critically analyze the 20-point Gaza Peace Plan, focusing on its substantive provisions and the practical challenges that could obstruct its implementation within the fragmented Palestinian polity. It also seeks to evaluate the impactof suchinternal fragmentation on the peace process outcomes as well as how these internal divisions influence the broader regional stability and the prospects for a sustainable resolution to the conflict.

Statement of the Problem

The implementation of President Donald Trump's 20-point Gaza Peace Plan, though at its infancy, could be confronted with formidable challenges stemming from the

deeply fragmented Palestinian polity. This is due to the ongoing political division between the Palestinian Authority, which dominates the West Bank, and Hamas, which controls Gaza, creating a fractured governing environment that the peace plan noticeably fails to reconcile. The chances of a cohesive and unified Palestinian response to the peace initiative are seriously threatened by this internal division, which makes coordination, governance, and the collective Palestinian front necessary for successful peacebuilding more difficult.

Extant literatures have it that earlier peace initiatives including the 20-point Gaza peace plan, generally concentrates on economic incentives and security arrangements while overlooking the basic political divisions within Palestinian society. As noted in recent analyses, without addressing the root causes of Palestinian political fragmentation, peace proposals risk remaining aspirational blueprints rather than actionable roadmaps (Kumaraswamy, (2020); Bukhari, 2025; Rohman, 2025; Carnegie Endowment, 2025). The failure to incorporate actionable mechanisms for political reconciliation and power-sharing within the peace deal threatens to entrench existing divisions, thereby impeding implementation and undermining long-term stability.

Furthermore, the failure of earlier peace initiatives, such as the Camp David Accord (1978), Oslo Accords (1993-1995), The Roadmap for peace (2003), and the Trump Peace Plan/Peace to Prosperity (2020), reveal that ignoring internal Palestinian political dynamics has frequently resulted in unfulfilled agreements and stalled negotiations (Paris, 2020; Thomas, 2025; RAND Commentary, 2025). Therefore, using the following research questions as a guide, the study assesses the extent to which the intra-Palestinian divide could significantly obstruct the practical actualisation of the objectives of the Gaza Peace Plan:

1. How does the internal political fragmentation between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority affect the Implementation prospect of the Trump Gaza Peace Initiative?
2. To what extent would the institutional and socio-economic challenges within the fragmented Palestinian polity hinder the sustainability of the Trump Gaza peace Initiative?

Research Objectives

The specific objectives of this study include:

1. To examine the impact of political fragmentation between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority on the effective implementation of the Trump Gaza peace Initiative.

2. To evaluate the extent to which institutional and socio-economic challenges within the fragmented Palestinian polity could hinder the sustainability of the Trump Gaza Initiative.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design aimed at providing an in-depth understanding of the internal impediments within the Palestinian polity which may likely hamper the successful actualisation of a sustainable peace deal. The qualitative approach is particularly suited to exploring complex political dynamics, institutional challenges and socio-economic context that quantitative method may not fully capture. The research also rely on both primary and secondary data sourced from media reports, official statements, policy briefs and scholarly articles which offer contextual background and critical interpretations necessary for comprehensive analysis. It also employed

content analysis in the interpretation and evaluation of the data.

Trump Gaza Peace Initiative (20-Point Gaza Peace Plan): A Conceptual Overview

President Donald Trump's Gaza Peace Initiative also known as the "20-point Gaza Peace Plan," which was unveiled at the white house on September 29, 2025, represents a comprehensive framework aimed at resolving the protracted conflict in Gaza and establishing a pathway toward lasting peace and stability. The plan's core objectives include an immediate cessation of hostilities, the release of hostages, the disarmament of militant groups, economic revitalization, and the establishment of effective governance structures in Gaza. It envisions a multilateral approach involving Israel, Hamas, the Palestinian Authority, and international stakeholders to address security, humanitarian, political, and economic dimensions of the conflict(Al Jazerra, 2025; BBC News, 2025).

Although, prior the enactment of the 20-point Peace Plan, President Donald J. Trump on February 4, 2025, declared his intent for the U.S. to seize control of the Gaza Strip and suggested that Palestinians leave their territory to other neighbouring countries particularly Jordan and Egypt. His intention was made during a call for a ceasefire between the Israelis and Hamas-led Palestinian militants. Trump expressed his vision to redevelop the territory into the "Riviera of the Middle East"(NBC News, 2025; Soliman, 2025). However, the idea of Palestinian expulsion appeared to be jettisoned in the actual peace proposal when it was revealed on September 29, 2025, during a press conference at the White House with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

A key feature of the plan is its emphasis on delivering humanitarian aid to Gaza without interference, which was operationalized through commitments to facilitate the daily entry of humanitarian supplies and reconstruction materials. This aspect underscores the plan's recognition of Gaza's dire humanitarian situation as a critical factor in peace building (Ferragamo, 2025).The plan's potential to provide fresh avenues for peace is acknowledged by the Carnegie Endowment (2025), but it is criticized for its scant attention to the underlying political divisions in Palestinian society. Without coordinated measures to promote political unity and reconciliation, the plan's concentration on economic incentives and security measures is viewed as inadequate.

Furthermore, the disarmament of Hamas in Gaza, which is presented as necessary to put a stop to violence and provide long-term security, is another crucial component of the peace proposal. The plan calls for the deployment of foreign peacekeeping forces to oversee compliance and a phased demilitarization strategy. This security-focused approach is part of a larger strategic goal to eradicate armed opposition and incorporate Gaza into a stable regional security framework.However, given Hamas's firmly established military and political presence in Gaza and its function as a de facto ruling body, this plan of action creates difficult issues of viability and legality. According to Amza (2025), Hamas's categorical rejection of the peace plan has cast doubt on its feasibility. As a result, the plan's insistence on disarmament without concurrent political reconciliation measures runs the danger of upsetting important Palestinian players and jeopardizing chances for inclusive peacebuilding.

Additionally, the plan advocates for the restoration of Palestinian political unity by encouraging reconciliation between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority. It envisions a cohesive framework for governance that can efficiently manage Gaza, carry out reforms, and collaborate with foreign funders. This

component recognizes the Palestinian polity's fragmentation as a significant barrier to peace (AJC, 2025; Soliman, 2025). Although the plan's call for political reconciliation is praiseworthy, its absence of specific procedures for resolving long-standing conflicts within the Palestinian polity makes it seem very ambiguous. Meanwhile, the plan's ability to address the underlying reasons of fragmentation is limited by the lack of specific measures for power-sharing, transitional governance, or conflict settlement within Palestinian factions.

More so, economic revitalization and reconstruction is a prominent pillar of the plan, which includes commitments to rebuild Gaza's infrastructure, create jobs, and stimulate private sector growth. The plan links economic incentives to security and political progress, positing that improved living conditions will reduce support for militancy and foster stability (The Guardian, 2025; Reuter, 2025).Given the plan's strong ties to peacebuilding initiatives, its reliance on economic measures without enough political foundation runs the risk of producing just surface-level results. The strategy barely tackles the intricate relationship between political disenfranchisement and economic hardship in Gaza, which calls for coordinated responses.

Moreover, the plan calls for strong international participation in the humanitarian and international aspects, including the role of the United Nations, regional actors, and donor nations in facilitating relief distribution, reconstruction, and compliance monitoring. It emphasizes how crucial humanitarian access and civilian population protection are. This multilateral aspect demonstrates an awareness that the problems facing Gaza go beyond regional players and call for concerted international action (BBC News, 2025).While this plan appears very ambitious, some scholars have expressed their skepticism of how international commitment and the willingness of regional powersto support Palestinian reconciliation and peace through the adoption of the "Board of Peace" chaired by the United States President Donald and former UK's Prime Minister, Tony Blair will lead to a lasting peace without risk being seen as a foreign imposition which is no different from other peace initiatives (Ferragamo, 2025; Amza, 2025; Thomas, 2025; Bukahri, 2025)

However, while the aforementioned existing scholarship provides a robust understanding of the political fragmentation and its implications, there remains a need for a more integrated analysis that connects the political, socio-economic and security dimensions of the peace initiatives in Gaza. Most of the studies focused on either the political or economic aspects in isolation, overlooking how these factors interact dynamically within a fragmented polity. This study therefore seeks to bridge the gap by examining how the interplay of political fragmentation, institutional weaknesses, and socio-economic realities could affect the successful implementation of the Trump Gaza peace initiative.

An Overview of Palestinian Political fragmentation

Palestine's long-standing political unrest dates back to the British Mandate in the early 20th century, when a number of factions with disparate ideas about Palestinian nationalism emerged. Internal conflicts continued even after the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was established in 1964 in an effort to bring the factions together. The two dominant factions, Fatah and Hamas, have their own different ideologies, goals, and methods regarding the Palestinian issue.According to Tahhan (2017), factionalism intensified following Hamas' victory over the long-ruling Fatah party in the 2006 Palestinian Authority parliamentary elections. Although the United States, the European Union, and other Western

actors refused to recognize the outcome, citing Hamas's designation as a terrorist organization since the late 1990s(Gelvin, 2021).The struggle between Hamas and Fatah swiftly descended into violence after Hamas seized control of the Gaza Strip (Sayigh, 2022). Between 2006 and 2011, there were multiple failed attempts at peace negotiations marked by intermittent warfare and political deadlock before all parties reached a reconciliation agreement. As a result, Fatah agreed to share authority with Hamas when a unity government was established in 2014 (Global Conflict Tracker, 2025).

However, in mid-2014, fighting in the Palestinian territories escalated hostilities between Israel and Hamas, with both sides responding with rocket fire. An Egyptian-brokered truce put a stop to the violent confrontation, which had claimed the lives of thousands of civilians. With Hamas de-facto ruling in the Gaza Strip and Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah party governing the Palestinian Authority from the West Bank, the internal political strife widened the gap between the two factions (Segal, 2019). Tension remained unabated despite President Trump's forceful response, which included suspending funding to Palestinian refugees, relocating the embassy to Jerusalem, and mediating the Abraham Accords with many Arab states, which the Palestinians rejected (Gelvin, 2021).

Consequently, the political rivalry between these factions has led to a lack of inclusive and unified Palestinian leadership capable of speaking for all Palestinians as well as growing mistrust among Palestinians, which has reduced public support for a peace proposal(Reuter, 2025). This seriously impedes the two sides' agreements on strengthening its economy. President Mahmoud Abass, the leader of the Fatah faction, and the current prime minister, Mohammad Abdullah Mohammad Mustafa, who was appointed by the President,also a member of the Fatah faction, are two examples of how the Fatah faction seems to monopolise the affairs of the Palestinian State. This appointment was however, met with harsh internal criticism, primarily from the Hamas faction, who strongly criticized the appointment, accusing it of making decisions unilaterally without consulting it (Domi & Lata, 2025).

As a result of the internal political conflict between these groups, the 20-point Gaza Peace Plan will inevitably come to a standstill, as it did with earlier peace accords. Therefore, in order to reach a consensus on the best way to sustain the peace plan, President Donald Trump will need to summon the two political factions for a roundtable discussion. This will ensure that the peace will have a long-lasting effect not only between the warring regions, Israel and Palestine but also on the entire Middle East region, whose resources were used to support either of the warring factions during the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Palestinian Fragmentation: Impact on the Trump Gaza Peace Plan

The deep-seated political division within the Palestinian polity, which permeates and exacerbates institutional flaws and socio-economic suffering, might pose a serious threat to the successful execution of the 20-point Gaza Peace Plan. Conflicting claims to legitimacy, governance, and security control are examples of this internal division.

According to Domi and Lata (2025) research on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, they confirm how the split between the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and Hamas in Gaza created a fractured political environment where conflicting authorities threaten cohesive policy implementation and unified government. In addition to making it difficult to put up a united front in talks, this political separation also breeds mistrust between parties, which makes it difficult to

work together on the peace plan's essential security, governance, and economic changes.Additionally, the disproportionate recognition of the Fatah faction by the United States, and the exclusion of the Hamas faction, represents a significant flaw in the peace plan. This approach overlooks the profound political fragmentation within the Palestinian territories, thereby undermining the plan's potential for sustainable peace. Ignoring the complexities and divisions between factions risks perpetuating instability and diminishes the likelihood of long-term success.

Furthermore, theintra-Palestinian divide, directly weakens institutional capacity, as parallel governance structures operate with divergent policies, legal frameworks, and administrative systems. The lack of coordination between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority of the Fatah faction results in fragmented service delivery, inconsistent enforcement of peace-related measures, and diminished accountability (Kumaraswamy, 2020; RAND Corporation, 2025).As a result, institutional flaws like inadequate administrative capacity and ineffective governance are symptoms and effects of the larger political split rather than separate issues. The grandiose objectives of the peace plan remain unachievable in the absence of cohesive institutions within the Palestinian polity, capable of overseeing economic initiatives, security arrangements, and rehabilitation.

Moreover, the socio-economic realities in Gaza, marked by high unemployment, poverty, and infrastructure deficits are both a cause and effect of this political and institutional fragmentation. Economic deprivation fuels public discontent and social fragmentation, which the militant faction, Hamas has exploited over the years to maintain influence and further complicate efforts to stabilize the region. The fragmented political environment hampers coordinated economic development and humanitarian aid delivery, as competing authorities struggle to manage resources effectively and equitably (Amza, 2025; Gelvin (2021); Soliman, (2025). This cyclical interaction between political division, institutional dysfunction, and socio-economic hardship creates a complex web of challenges that collectively undermine public support for the peace initiative which in turn weakens its implementation.

In essence, the intra-Palestinian fragmentation serves as a centrifugal force, dispersing the capacity for governance, shattering social cohesiveness, and impeding economic advancement. Despite its comprehensive design, the 20-Point Gaza Peace Initiative runs the potential of failing unless it specifically addresses these interconnected aspects. Prioritising political reconciliation is necessary to improve institutional capacity, unite governing institutions, and foster an atmosphere that is conducive to socio-economic recovery. The peace plan can only become a reality through an integrated approach that recognizes and addresses the interconnectedness of institutional, political, and socioeconomic difficulties.

Discussion of Findings

The study revealshow complex interaction of political division, institutional weakness, and long-standing socioeconomic challenges inside the Palestinian polity could severely limits the 20-Point Gaza Peace Initiative's ability to be implemented successfully.

The enduring division between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority fractures governance and undermines institutional coherence and legitimacy, impeding unified decision-making and effective policy execution. The 20-point peace plan did not do much to address this issue; instead it contributed to the heightened tension by the recognition of one faction which is the Palestinian Authority as the

legitimate representative of the Palestinian people while categorically excluding Hamas, a dominant political and military actor with a strong stake in Gaza in the peace transition process. This exclusionary stance not only delegitimizes a key stakeholder but also alienates a significant portion of Gaza's population, thereby undermining prospects for inclusive political reconciliation.Furthermore, the plan's narrow geographic focus on Gaza, with the West Bank largely excluded despite its integral role in the broader Palestinian territorial and political tensions, creates an incomplete framework that fails to address the full complexity of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Additionally, Political divisions worsen institutional flaws, leading to disjointed service delivery and reduced administrative capability, which in turn weaken public confidence and sustain ineffective administration. At the same time, Gaza's terrible socio-economic circumstances, which include widespread poverty, unemployment, and inadequate infrastructure, both result from and exacerbate this political and institutional division, causing social disintegration and public unrest that impede efforts to promote peace.

In sum, these factors function in a dynamic feedback cycle whereby political polarization is reinforced by socio-economic hardships, institutional failures exacerbate socio-economic grievances, and political division weakens institutions.Therefore the peace plan's failure to equitably engage all Palestinian factions and territories risks perpetuating this cycle by entrenching exclusion and division. This cyclical entanglement underscores that piecemeal approaches focusing solely on economic incentives or security measures are insufficient. Instead, the findings advocate for an integrated, adaptive, and context-sensitive strategy that simultaneously addresses political reconciliation, institutional reform, and socio-economic revitalization as prerequisites for transforming the peace initiative from aspirational rhetoric into sustainable reality.

Conclusion

The study examined the multifaceted challenges that could confront the sustainable implementation of the 20-point Gaza peace initiative within the deeply fragmented Palestinian political landscape. The study argues that the enduring political division between the Palestinian Authority is a decisive factor that shapes the feasibility and effectiveness of peace efforts. The peace plan's lopsided recognition of the Palestinian Authority and the exclusion of Hamas from its framework fundamentally undermine its inclusivity and legitimacy which further weakens the Palestinian institutional structure, thereby creating a vicious cycle that hampers any peace building effort in the region. Therefore, for sustainable conflict resolution to take place there is a need for the peace framework to prioritise Palestinian unity alongside economic and security measures as already stipulated in the peace plan. This is because, without addressing the internal political divisions within the Palestinian polity, the Trump Gaza Peace Initiative risks remaining an aspirational proposal rather than a practical roadmap for peace.

Recommendations

The study recommends that the20-point Gaza peace plan be revisited in order to include practical measures for Palestinian institutional integration and political reconciliation. Additionally, in order to foster a unified Palestinian front that is necessary for the successful implementation of a sustainable peace effort; international actors should encourage inclusive dialogue processes between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority that would bridge internal divides.

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