



U.S. to downsize Kiryat Gat center and house Gazans in Israeli-controlled Strip

Liza Rozovsky

America is seeking to reduce its military presence at the Civil-Military Coordinating Center it established in Israel, transfer the center to civilian hands and subordinate it to the international Board of Peace that is supposed to be established soon and oversee postwar arrangements in the Gaza Strip, two American officials said.

One source said the Board of Peace, which will be headed by U.S. President Donald Trump, is a "cornerstone" of the Amer-

ican plan for Gaza.

"As outlined in the UNSC resolution adopted this week, the Board of Peace will coordinate the delivery of humanitarian assistance and facilitate Gaza's development," he said, referring to the UN Security Council. "It will also support a technocratic committee of Palestinians responsible for day-to-day operations of Gaza's civil service and administration while the Palestinian Authority implements their reform program."

As a result of the decision to civilianize the coordinating center, some of the 200

U.S. soldiers originally sent to Israel to establish the center in Kiryat Gat have already begun leaving.

Two diplomatic sources involved in what is happening at the coordinating center and a third source stationed there all said that developing Gaza, or more accurately building so-called "safe communities" for Gazans in the Israeli-controlled part of the territory, is high on the Americans' list of priorities.

The Americans, one of

the diplomats said this week, have two goals – "opening more crossings to bring in aid and building those temporary communities." He added that building those communities might also be in Israel's interest, since doing so would effectively divide Gaza in two.

Currently, more than 20 countries have representatives at the Civil-Military Coordinating Center, including European states and certain Arab countries, like Egypt and the United Arab

Emirates. In the context of their involvement, they are posing legal and moral questions to Washington about the plan to build new communities in Gaza.

These questions include who will be chosen to live in those communities and based on what criteria, whether people who move to them will be able to leave, and what will happen to the legal owners of the land on which they are built.

One of the diplomats said the current American idea

is to expropriate the land and compensate the owners. He added that the coordinating center is currently engaged in planning how to clear the rubble to build the new temporary communities and the plans are moving forward rapidly.

Nevertheless, according to several other sources, none of the countries participating in the CMCC is currently objecting forcefully to the American plan; instead, some are trying to persuade Washington to use the construction of these communities to grant the Palestinian Authority

a practical role in Gaza. "Somebody would need to manage the schools and the hospitals in Gaza, including in those 'safe communities,'" a European diplomat said this week.

But despite the pressure other countries are exerting on Washington, several sources said, the people making the policy decisions about construction of the new communities aren't based at the Kiryat Gat center. The decisions are made at the White House or in consultations between

Gazan sources: IDF airstrikes kill at least 24 people

Jonathan Lis, Jack Khoury, Reuters and The Associated Press

Israeli airstrikes across Gaza killed at least 24 Palestinians and wounded several others, local health authorities said on Saturday, in the latest test of a fragile cease-fire between Hamas and Israel.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office described the strikes as a response to Hamas cease-fire violations, which the group denied.

Also on Saturday, the IDF said that 17 Palestinian militants who tried to flee the underground complex in Rafah were either killed or captured, with 11 killed and six detained.

One strike targeted a vehicle, killing 11 and wounding 20 Palestinians in Gaza City's Rimal neighborhood, said Rami Mhanna, managing director of Al-Shifa Hospital, where the casualties were taken. The majority of those wounded were children, director Mohamed Abu Selmiya said.

Another strike targeting a house near Al-Awda Hospital in central Gaza killed at least three people and wounded 11 others, according to the hospital. It said a strike on a house in Nuseirat camp in central Gaza killed one child and wounded 16 others.

A strike targeting a house in Deir al-Balah in central Gaza killed three people, including a woman, according to Al-Aqsa Hospital.

"Suddenly, I heard a powerful explosion," said Khalil Abu Hatab in Deir al-Balah. "I looked outside and saw smoke covering the entire area. I couldn't see a thing. I covered my ears and started shouting to the others in the tent to run. When I looked again, I realized the upper floor of my neighbor's house was gone."

October 7 families lead protest for state inquiry commission

Linda Dayan, Yair Foldes, Eden Solomon and Adi Hashmonai

Tens of thousands of Israelis protested across the country on Saturday evening, calling to establish a state commission of inquiry into the October 7 attack.

The main demonstration was held at Tel Aviv's Habi-

Missing Families Forum featured speeches by relatives of Dror Or and Ran Gvili, whose bodies are still held in Gaza. The third deceased hostage whose body is still in Gaza is Sudthisak Rinthalak. Additional demonstrations took place in Haifa, Be'er Sheva and more than a dozen communities and intersections nationwide.

At Tel Aviv's Habima Square, thousands of people gathered to demand a state commission of inquiry. Former and current politicians, including Benny Gantz, Gadi Eisenkot, Yair Golan and Gilad Kariv attended.

Former right-wing Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, who has said he will head a party in the next election, urged supporters to join: "We were slaughtered in our own land, and to this moment no one has stood up and said, 'I am responsible.'"

Names and photos of Israelis killed during the war were projected onto the central screen above the stage.

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Protesters calling for the return of the final hostages' bodies and for a state commission of inquiry into the October 7 disaster, in Tel Aviv Saturday.

Itai Ron

U.S. puts Beirut in dilemma

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ma Square. Most leaders of the Israeli opposition – excluding the Arab parties – attended, marking one of the first mass protests since the return of most Israeli hostages from Gaza, as lawmakers eye elections scheduled for next year. Organizers said dozens of Knesset members joined the crowds.

At Tel Aviv's Hostage Square, the weekly rally organized by the Hostages and

Deputy AG: Gov't failing to fight crime in Arab communities

Josh Breiner

Israel's deputy attorney general warned that the government is failing to act against crime in the Arab community and stalling key legislation meant to bolster law enforcement efforts to combat said crime, in a letter issued on Thursday to the prime minister's office.

The sharply worded letter was sent by Deputy Attorney General Sharon Afek to Roi Cahlon, head of the Prime Minister's Office task force on crime and violence in Arab society, warning that "the strategic threat posed by major crime in general, and crime in the Arab community in particular, is extremely severe."

Since the beginning of the year, 226 people from the Arab community in Israel were killed – a record number – according to Haaretz's monitoring of the situation.

Afek sent the letter in response to claims made by Cahlon that Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara is refraining from convening the top-level team she heads to combat crime, and is taking insufficient action to address the crime ravaging Arab communities in Israel.

In the letter, Afek outlined recommendations set forth by the Attorney General's office, saying that these are "a series of steps that the Israeli government can and should advance, and we hope this will be done as

soon as possible."

In his letter, Afek retaliated at the accusation and alluded to the effectiveness of the 2022 "safe track" program launched by the government headed by Yair Lapid and Naftali Bennett, which initiated a weekly scheduled meeting with all heads of law enforcement agencies to coordinate strategies and operational activities.

"Regrettably, a team similar to the one that operated during the program has not been established," Afek wrote.

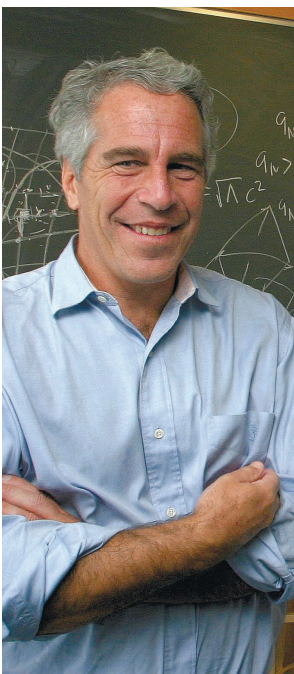
Several police sources who spoke with Haaretz before the program was

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In the Oval Office

Trump lauds Mamdani despite NYC mayor-elect's Israel criticism

Ben Samuels and The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — New York City Mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani, holding his hotly anticipated first meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump at the White House, reiterated his highly scrutinized position that U.S. taxpayer funds should not aid Israeli violations of human rights.

The meeting, held weeks after the progressive democratic socialist's victory sent shock waves throughout the world, was much more positive in tone, punctuated by Trump's repeated praise of the incoming mayor – even amid right-wing reporters' attempts at manufacturing conflict between the two officials who have been highly critical of one another.

Trump, speaking alongside Mamdani at a news conference in the Oval Office, downplayed Mamdani's earlier suggestion that Netanyahu should be arrested if he visits New York, saying, "We didn't discuss" it and noted Mamdani "has views a little ... out there ... but who knows. We'll see what works. He's gonna change. We all change. I change a lot."

Mamdani added that in the past, he's "spoken about the Israeli government committing genocide and our government funding it," and that he shared



Donald Trump with Zohran Mamdani in the White House, Friday.

Evan Vucci/AP

with Trump the concern of his city's residents, "about wanting their tax dollars to go toward the benefit of New Yorkers and their ability to afford basic dignity."

According to Mamdani, "there's a desperate need for the follow-through of human rights, but also the promises we've made New Yorkers," for funding efforts to find housing solutions for over 100,000 schoolchildren in the city.

The Mayor-elect shared that when he spoke with New Yorkers who voted for Trump last November, he heard two major reasons:

"they wanted an end to forever wars," and to address the cost of living.

Trump, who emphasized a push for "total disarmament of Hamas and everyone else," claimed the U.S. "actually has total peace in the Middle East."

On Lebanon, Trump added, "Hezbollah has been a big problem. We're working with Lebanon and everyone. ... We both want to see peace in the Middle East."

"I appreciate all the efforts toward peace," Mamdani continued. "I shared with the president that when I spoke with voters, people

were tired of seeing our tax dollars fund endless wars and that we have to follow through with international human rights that are still today being violated, and that continues to be work that still needs to be done, no matter where we're speaking of," Mamdani added.

These comments follow backlash Mamdani faced on Wednesday, after his team responded to an anti-Israel protest outside a Manhattan synagogue that was hosting an event promoting Jewish immigration to Israel on

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Tony Blair with Netanyahu. They had seven meetings in 2024.

Kobi Gideon/GPO

Avi Scharf and Jonathan Lis

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's 2024 diary reveals he maintained close ties with Republican lawmakers, including with veteran Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, amid rising tensions with the Democratic Biden administration over Israel's policies during the war in Gaza.

According to the diary, Netanyahu held seven meetings and nine phone calls

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