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## Egypt's Plan for Gaza

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For over 16 months, Palestinians in Gaza have endured an unspeakable humanitarian tragedy unseen since the Second World War. Over 2.2 million people in Gaza have been internally displaced, with 150,000 people killed and injured, 50% of hospitals and medical facilities destroyed, 88% of schools partially or fully shattered, and 68% of roads have become dysfunctional. As the statistics reflect, Israel's war didn't turn out to be just a war against Hamas, but expanded to the entire civilian population and its critical infrastructure.

To address this crisis of colossal magnitude, two critical steps need to be taken. First, we must immediately provide a comprehensive and thorough humanitarian plan that alleviates the suffering of Palestinians and restore life back to Gaza through early recovery programs and reconstruction. Second, it is imperative that we offer a political roadmap that brings decisive closure to the Palestinian - Israeli conflict once and for all culminating in an independent Palestinian state and ensure that this latest horrific round of violence becomes the final one. Let me address both steps.

Egypt has put together a multi-phase and time-bound plan for the reconstruction of Gaza that will include three main phases with a time frame extending from 2025 - 2030. The plan received full endorsement by 22 Arab states. It will include in its first phase an initial early recovery program extending for six months offering urgent relief to Palestinians in Gaza by providing thousands of temporary housing units in the form of caravans, prefabricated homes, and tents that would temporarily shelter 1.2 million Palestinians in Gaza. It will also include extensive programs for removal and recycling of approximately 50 million tons of rubble, clearance of unexploded ordnances and munitions. The remaining two phases will center entirely on reconstruction. They will include construction of a total of 400,000 permanent housing units accommodating 2.7 million Palestinians, rehabilitation of road networks, and agricultural reclamation of 20,000 acres. The reconstruction phases will also include the construction of two ports, an airport, solar power plants, a governmental service center, educational and medical facilities. Once the fundamental infrastructure and essential facilities are set, Gaza will be ready for global investments in different sectors including tourism, energy, and logistics.

The plan was designed in full conformity with the core principles of urban planning set out in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) of the United Nations. Egypt has extensive and valuable experience from previous reconstruction cycles in Gaza that followed repeated rounds of violence between Israel and Hamas. The fact

that Gaza borders Egypt, places Egypt at the forefront when it comes to logistical planning and operational execution for reconstruction and rehabilitation.

The plan was devised to ensure Palestinians in Gaza remain in their homeland. Palestinians are averse to ideas that suggest their removal from their native territory. Their collective memory is fraught with agony and grief, given the tragic historic injustice inflicted on their people who were forcibly driven out by Israel from their homeland in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century. They have been unable to return ever since. As such, Palestinians are exceptionally sensitive to attempts to detach them from their homeland and are well aware that departing Gaza will be a one-way ticket.

But the massive challenge of reconstruction in Gaza is undeniably too big for one country to handle. This needs to be a collective international effort with the involvement of a significant number of companies involved in all reconstruction phases, including multiple U.S. companies. That is why Egypt will host an international conference on the reconstruction of Gaza in cooperation with the United Nations. This global assembly will solicit funding and secure financial pledges to execute the 5-year plan which will require an approximate \$53 billion.

Simultaneously, a new Palestinian Committee will be established to administer Gaza. This committee will be exclusively run by Palestinian technocrats that are not affiliated with any faction whatsoever. Its main functions will be to govern Gaza, manage humanitarian assistance, and serve for a transitional period paving the way for the return of the Palestinian Authority to Gaza. There will be no room for any faction to govern Gaza during this transitional period. In the meantime, we must swiftly work to restore law and order in Gaza. That is why Egypt will immediately start training thousands of Palestinian police officers to bolster security, counter lawlessness, and restore confidence in the public.

While we work to address humanitarian, security, and governance issues in Gaza, we also have a profound duty to offer a political horizon that generates hope and brings peace between Palestinians and Israelis. This roadmap should culminate in the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the lines of 4<sup>th</sup> of June, 1967 where Palestinians can finally live free from Israeli occupation. We must offer a future for the Palestinians anchored in hope not despair, liberty not captivity, and independence not subjugation. Only when Palestinians are free, will we succeed in luring them away from the pitfall of extremism and radicalism.

That is why the leadership of President Trump is crucial in this historic juncture. His inaugural address reflected his deep-rooted desire to achieve global peace and cease endless wars that have ravaged multiple regions and brought nothing but anguish and grief to their people. We look forward to working with President Trump to realize a historic deal that can finally bring closure to this conflict and deliver peace, security, and prosperity to both Palestinians and Israelis.