



Trump says no right of return for Palestinians under Gaza plan



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US President Donald Trump has said the two million Palestinians who would be resettled in neighbouring countries under his plan to take over and rebuild the Gaza Strip would have no right of return. "No, they wouldn't, because they're going to have much better housing," he told Fox News. "I'm talking about building a permanent place for them."

A clip of the interview was released a day after Trump said he was "committed to buying and owning Gaza", despite global condemnation of the plan he unveiled last week. The Palestinian Authority and the armed group Hamas, whose 16-month war with Israel has caused widespread devastation in Gaza, reiterated that Palestinian land was "not for sale". But Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu praised Trump's proposal as "revolutionary and creative".

The UN has warned that any forced displacement of civilians from occupied territory is strictly prohibited under international law and "tantamount to ethnic cleansing". It comes three weeks into a fragile ceasefire in Gaza, during which Hamas has released some of the Israeli hostages it is holding in exchange for Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.

The Israeli military launched a campaign to destroy Hamas in response to an unprecedented cross-border attack on 7 October 2023, in which about 1,200 people were killed and 251 were taken hostage. More than 48,200 people have been killed in Gaza since then, according to the territory's Hamas-run health ministry.

Most of Gaza's population has also been displaced multiple times, almost 70% of buildings are estimated to be damaged or destroyed, the healthcare, water, sanitation and hygiene systems have collapsed, and there are shortages of food, fuel. In his interview with Fox News's Bret Baier, Trump promised to build "beautiful communities" for the Palestinians of Gaza. "Could be five, six, could be two. But we'll build safe communities, a little bit away from where they are, where all of this danger is. In the meantime, I would own this," he said. Think of it as a real estate development for the future. It would be a beautiful piece of land. No big money spent. "He then explained that the Palestinians would have no right of return to Gaza because their lives would be "much better" elsewhere, contradicting Secretary of State Marco Rubio and White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt, who told reporters last week that the relocations would be temporary during reconstruction. As far as us rebuilding it, we may give it to other states in the Middle East to build sections of it. Other people may do it through our auspices. But we're committed to owning it, taking it, and making sure that Hamas doesn't move back."

Trump said people from all over the world would be able to move to Gaza and that Palestinians would not want to go back there. They only go back because they have no alternative," he claimed,