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Commentary...

The Middle East's Morning After By Amit Segal

I've been covering the Knesset, Israel's parliament, for 25 years. Never before have I seen it in such a state of ecstasy as when the president of the United States ascended the podium Monday, at the same time as the last freed, living Israeli hostage arrived in the country and embraced his family. Two years of suffering, pain, and anxiety ended in an instant.

"This is," Trump said, "the historic dawn of a new Middle East." The big words justified themselves this time. In a region that places great stock in symbols and perception, this Knesset session was meant to broadcast to enemies and friends alike: Here, the United States of America and the State of Israel are celebrating victory at the end of a two-year war, together.

In the several years before October 7, 2023, a weak and hostile Democratic administration distanced itself from Israel. This time—and not because there are no windows in the Knesset plenum due to security—there was no daylight between Jerusalem and Washington.

"The last two years have been a time of war. The coming two years will hopefully be a time of peace," said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during his speech, invoking Ecclesiastes, a passage recently read in synagogues on Sukkot.

We will, of course, still speak about the war in the coming weeks and months. But the bigger question is: What kind of peace will it be?

Since the 1970s, the prevailing view in Israel was that the path to peace with the Arab states rested on the creation of a Palestinian state. Egypt signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1979 only after Israel committed to a process for Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza. Jordan signed a peace treaty in 1994, a year after the Oslo Accords established the Palestinian Authority (PA) as a form of interim Palestinian self-government. Both of these concessions have led to violence.

Too many negotiations have been based on the idea that if Israel granted the Palestinians a state five minutes from Israelis' homes—no matter how much terror came from there—it would be allowed to exist peacefully in the Middle East.

Netanyahu, first elected in 1996, never believed this myth for a moment. But a line of American Democratic presidents—Bill Clinton, Barack Obama, and Joe Biden—did not allow him to wriggle free. For years, pressure from the United States forced him to declare support for two states for two peoples, no matter how implausible he knew that prospect to be.

And then came Donald Trump. The brilliant achievement of the Abraham Accords was Israel's ability to establish peace with four Arab states, without making concessions on the Palestinian issue. It was a moment led by the United Arab Emirates, a country that could not stand the corrupt, terror-supporting Palestinian Authority. Saudi Arabia was meant to be next. The date it was supposed to join: October 19, 2023.

Twelve days before that date, Hamas murderers invaded Israel. Their immediate goal was to kill and rape as many as possible, but the timing was also intended to block Israeli normalization with Saudi Arabia. For two years, they succeeded. Israel drifted further and further from the moderate Arab states. Qatari money, which bankrolled Hamas's terror, kept Israel locked in conflict. Meanwhile, the Jewish state received more and more condemnations from the international community for causing supposed "starvation" and "genocide."

But over time, it became clear to these Arab states that Israel would not put up with this status quo any longer. This was exemplified

first by Israel's attacks on Iran, and more recently by its September 9 air strike on senior Hamas leaders gathering in Qatar. It was clear that the continuation of the war jeopardized the stability of the entire region. Something had to

change.

Too many negotiations have been based on the idea that if Israel granted the Palestinians a state five minutes from Israelis' homes—no matter how much terror came from there—it would be allowed to exist peacefully in the Middle East.

And so: In late September, eight Arab countries publicly supported Trump's 20-point peace plan for Gaza, a vital step toward pressuring Hamas to accept the deal—which it did days later. On Monday morning, the first phone call in two years took place between Netanyahu and Egyptian president Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, ahead of a Gaza peace summit in Egypt with more than 20 world leaders. Turkey is considering resuming its flights to Israel, which have been suspended since the beginning of the war. Indonesia's president is attending the Egypt summit and is considering signing a peace agreement with Israel. Syria is wavering between a security arrangement and a comprehensive peace agreement. When Saudi Arabia joins the Abraham Accords, it will not be the last Arab country to do so.

Has Netanyahu and Trump's approach of establishing peace in the Middle East through the surrounding Arab states completely triumphed? It's more complicated than that. As part of the deal, Israel has to pay lip service to a future vision (entirely hypothetical, in my view) of a Palestinian state, predicated on the prospect that the Palestinian Authority will cease supporting terror and change its ways. And, during the transitional phase of the peace deal, the PA will have some level of presence in Gaza.

These gestures may be purely symbolic. But Hamas still exists inside of Gaza, and it's unclear what form the long-term governance of the region will take. And so, though this is indeed a major breakthrough, the answer to the question, "What kind of peace will it be?" remains to be seen.

For now, it's safe to say: The path to peace in the Middle East does not run through Ramallah. (The Free Press Oct 13)

Trump Deserves His Middle East Victory Lap

By Matthew Continetti

President Donald Trump's triumphal address to the Israeli Knesset Monday had it all: solemn vows, idealistic visions, boasts of strength, rambling digressions, and sarcastic humor. Not to mention a surprise twist, when Trump called on Israeli president Isaac Herzog to end Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's criminal trial by pardoning him. Trump said the appeal wasn't in his prepared text. "But I happen to like this gentleman over here," Trump explained, "and it just seems to make so much sense."

Spontaneity, common sense, and thumbing one's nose at political establishments in America and beyond—these are hallmarks of Trump's rhetoric. Yet the Knesset speech was unique. It was revealing. It will be remembered.

The circumstances were historic: an end to two years of war in Gaza and the release of the remaining Israeli hostages. The occasion was noteworthy: Trump became the first president to address the Israeli parliament since 2008. And the lesson was clear: Trump's alignment with Netanyahu has remade the Middle East in ways that strengthen both the Jewish state and the United States of America. "The day breaks on a region transformed," Trump said.

This was not inevitable. In many respects, Trump's second term is unlike his first one. The tariffs are harsher. The immigration crackdown is for real. Political opponents face reprisals. The Western hemisphere takes priority over Russia and even China. Some MAGA-adjacent podcasters stoke antisemitic flames. They want to burn the

connections between Christians and Jews.

Perhaps it was inevitable that Trump's instinct for challenging conventional wisdom found its greatest expression in a region encrusted with liberal guilt, diplomatic pieties, and multilateral claptrap.

Yet there's one place where Trump's approach has been a straight line for more than a decade. That place is Israel. When dealing with the Middle East, Trump has never wavered. He's committed to fighting terrorism and to peace through strength—core concepts in Netanyahu's statecraft as well. And by siding with Israel and against the militant Islamists who despise the West, Trump has done more to advance peace than the State Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs could hope to achieve in a million years.

Perhaps it was inevitable that Trump's instinct for challenging conventional wisdom found its greatest expression in a region encrusted with liberal guilt, diplomatic pieties, and multilateral claptrap. He won't succumb to moral equivalence between Israel and its enemies. He won't pretend that diplomacy without the credible threat of force is useful. "I love Israel," Trump told the Knesset. "I'm with you all the way."

It shows. Defending Israel at the UN. Moving the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem. Recognizing Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights. Acknowledging the Jewish people's rights in Judea and Samaria (the West Bank). Withdrawing from the Iran nuclear deal. Eliminating Iranian terror master Qasem Soleimani. The Abraham Accords normalizing relations between Israel and three Muslim nations. Securing the hostage release earlier this year. Supporting Israel during its 12-day war with Iran. Destroying the Iranian nuclear program. And, most recently, returning the hostages and ending the fighting in Gaza.

These decisions were contingent. They could have gone the other way. And if that had happened—as Trump offhandedly observed in the Knesset—today would be different indeed.

Would Israeli and American families be celebrating the return of their loved ones today if Trump hadn't bombed Iran's nuclear facilities, or if he hadn't backed Netanyahu's order to send the Israel Defense Forces into Gaza City? Would Hamas be beaten, Hezbollah blown up, and the Assads in exile if Netanyahu had given in to pressure from President Joe Biden? And what would the world look like if—perish the thought—a President Kamala Harris sat in the White House? She wouldn't have been spotted in the plenum, that's for sure.

Instead, human agency drove events in the direction of victory. Trump's daring and Netanyahu's resolve beat back Iranian terror networks, furthering the interests of both their countries. To achieve that goal, both leaders had to dismiss the global media uproar. It was worth the risk.

The bond between Trump and Israel is not easily explained. Perhaps it's personal: As he mentioned to the Knesset, Trump has a Jewish daughter and Jewish grandchildren. Perhaps it's political: Pro-Israel evangelical Christians are the foundation of the Republican Party. Part of the reason is psychological: Trump, you may have heard, likes people and nations that achieve. In his remarks, he called Netanyahu a winner and Israel a miracle. It punches far above its weight. For Trump, whose eye always looks to strength and weakness, Israel is an attractive ally because it sticks up for itself.

There's also a spiritual connection between Trump and Israel. The connection has grown stronger since the attempt on his life in July 2024. You notice it in his language. Earlier this year, when he announced that Operation Midnight Hammer in Iran was a success, Trump thanked God. Today, at the Knesset, he invoked God several times. For many Christians, Israel is more than a democratic ally. Israel proves the Bible is true.

Whatever the reason for Trump's steadfast leadership in the Middle East, as we say at the Passover Seder—dayenu. It would be enough. With his appearance in the Knesset, Trump rightly took his place as a champion of freedom and justice. And his message cannot be denied: "The state of Israel is strong and it will live and thrive forever." (The Free Press Oct 13)

Israel Must Ensure its Freedom of Action in Gaza will be Preserved By Prof. Eyal Zisser

A deal between Israel and Hamas is a done deal, and even if last-minute obstacles appear on the way to achieving it, it will come about. Why? Because President Donald Trump wants it, and in matters concerning Israel and its future his will and opinion carry decisive weight.

Much can be said about Trump, but he knows how to recognize when a deal can and should be closed, and that ability has led him to conclude that now is the time to free the hostages and end the war. That conclusion matches the mood of the Israeli public, but it is also aligned with our vital interests. This was understood long ago by David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, a figure we have not seen since.

Ben-Gurion made many historic decisions in his life, but two proved above all the most important. One was to establish a state at any cost, despite internal and international opposition and despite knowing that this would lead to war with the Arab states. The second, no less important, was to end the war. Not because we had achieved all our objectives, far from it, but because, as he put it, there is a time and season for everything, and Ben-Gurion understood that war is not an end in itself. Israel must turn to a more important task: absorbing mass immigration and building a society, a nation and a state, and, he explained, leave the rest to future generations.

Like Ben-Gurion, Trump, for his own reasons, understands the necessity of bringing the war to an end. But Trump is known for his disdain of minutiae and for believing that endless debate among experts or, worse, lawyers will never produce an agreement.

So, shrewdly and even brilliantly, he put on the table an offer that cannot be refused: immediate, unconditional and complete release of all hostages and missing persons, something the Israeli public longs for, in exchange for a final and absolute end to the war, something the world wants and something Trump now identifies as a supreme interest for both himself and Israel.

When that happens, everything else will become secondary, not urgent and not pressing, and can be addressed in a step-by-step fashion. Sometimes in Israel's interest and sometimes for humanitarian reasons — questions such as the scope and timing of an Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, which Palestinian prisoners will be released as part of the deal, how to allow civilian aid into Gaza, and the critical question of what will happen in the Strip after the fact.

What Trump proposes is an important opportunity for Israel that could save it from itself and from the dead end in which we have been stuck for months. But it requires eyes wide open and protection of our security interests, with Trump's help and, if necessary, despite Trump.

What will happen in Gaza should be learned from what happened a year ago in Lebanon. Then, too, we accepted a flawed agreement that was plainly never intended to be honored by the Hezbollah terrorist organization. Hezbollah continues to refuse to disarm and acts freely to rebuild its strength, while Israel has been content with pinpoint actions that do not change the situation at its root.

Gaza is not Lebanon. Hamas was dealt a crushing blow, unlike Hezbollah, which preserved much of its capability. The geography of the Strip is entirely different from Lebanon's. Still, we must learn lessons from what happened in Lebanon.

Hopes that the Hamas terrorist organization will voluntarily disarm, that international forces will deploy in the Strip, and that a process of Palestinian governance building will begin from which Hamas will be excluded — all these are false hopes. Therefore Israel must ensure that it retains freedom of action. Not by unnecessary additional ground maneuvering in the Strip, but by decisive action against any attempt by Hamas to rebuild its army, its rockets, its battalions and its divisions.

And of course, ensure that no house, street or neighborhood in the Strip is reconstructed while Hamas remains in control. Restoring Israel's strength, at home and abroad, is the crucial mission before us today, and if in addition we can advance regional peace, there is no greater victory than that. (Israel Hayom Oct 12)

Who will Disarm Hamas? By Danny Zaken

After the initial euphoria over the return by Hamas of 20 living Israeli hostages and the outrage at the terrorist organization for handing over only a fraction of the deceased hostages, talks on the next steps to end the war in Gaza are advancing.

Before moving to the next stage of U.S. President Donald Trump's 20-point plan, ending the first stage is required, namely the return of all deceased hostages, 24 in total.

Hamas already said last week that it would have difficulty locating all the deceased, since some were buried at sites destroyed in strikes, and because several commanders who knew the locations had been killed.

The summary of last week's talks in Sharm el-Sheikh was that Hamas would deliver nearly 20 deceased hostages within the allotted time, meaning by Monday; the remaining bodies would be located by international teams aided by engineering equipment.

Hamas did not meet that commitment, and have delivered only nine deceased hostages. Its representatives have told mediators there are logistical difficulties, but Israeli officials say this is an excuse and that, based on the information Israel holds, Hamas is able to hand over the bodies but is simply choosing not to.

The Israeli message is that until this phase is completed and all bodies are delivered, there will be no further progress. That said, if it becomes clear that a few truly cannot be found—and there is such a concern—searches may continue in parallel.

The remainder of the plan's implementation can be divided into two stages: the practical end of hostilities, and the post-conflict stage, the start of long-term rehabilitation in Gaza as well as implementing regional political programs, including expanded normalization and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These later issues are discussed but not detailed beyond what appears in Trump's plan.

The coming stage will be the toughest of all. Trump's plan mandates, in at least two of its points, the disarmament of the Strip. The first point states: Gaza will be a demilitarized, terror-free zone that does not pose a threat to its neighbors. Point 13 says all military, terrorist and offensive infrastructure, including tunnels and weapons-manufacturing facilities, will be destroyed and not rebuilt.

There will be a process of demilitarizing Gaza, under the supervision of independent inspectors, which will include the removal of weapons through an agreed dismantling process.

This involves not only the handing over of weapons but also the demolition of tunnels and the cessation of any actions that have hostile military significance against Israel.

At the same time, a civilian and security mechanism is supposed to be created to assume control of the Strip, but most potential participants will not commit forces to areas under Hamas control while it remains armed and dangerous.

So, who will disarm Hamas? There is no clear answer to that question.

Implementation of these clauses is a condition for further steps, including continued Israeli withdrawal. But given statements by Hamas leaders and the organization's actions on the ground, including clashes with rival militias, the resumption of extortion or, more accurately, protection rackets imposed on Gaza merchants and Hamas's need to show some achievement, all of these will make implementation extremely difficult.

The expectation is that while dragging out talks and negotiations, Hamas will work to strengthen its control in the areas it still holds, less than half of the Strip, and will continue recruiting and training terrorists and attempting to rearm.

It is not far-fetched to expect Hamas to also initiate direct incidents to test the Israeli military.

Israel, for its part, has declared its determination to insist on adherence to the deal and the return of all the deceased hostages, and will likely be tested on these conditions.

The mediators are supposed to intervene here and try to complete stage one, but given their hostility to Israel, only American involvement will likely allow progress. (Israel Hayom Oct 16)

Why Netanyahu was Booed at Hostages Square By Gadi Taub

If you hadn't known anything about the huge crowd that gathered in Tel Aviv's Hostages Square two days before the actual return of the rest of the living hostages, you'd have thought you stumbled into a rally of the Israeli chapter of MAGA. The banners celebrated U.S. President Donald Trump as the godfather of the hostage deal, and Trump's personal representatives—Steve Witkoff, Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner—were warmly welcomed.

The atmosphere was festive, even ecstatic. These have been two long years, during which massively long tables with empty chairs, each bearing the name of a hostage, were set up, and vows to see them all back with us were taken. And here we were on the eve of the realization of that ardent wish.

All seemed to go well, until Witkoff thanked Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. At the sound of the name, the crowd erupted with spontaneous boos and whistles, forcing Witkoff to plead with them to let him finish. Witkoff himself was understandably baffled. Why would the people who most vocally demanded a hostage deal boo the prime minister who delivered it?

Of course, Israelis understood full well what was going on. The event was not what it seemed. This was not just any celebration. It was a left-wing political rally, in the very venue where the "Bring Them Home, Now!" campaign held countless anti-Netanyahu rallies.

And this crowd's newfound love for Trump was not just spontaneous gratitude for the American president's role in brokering the deal. It was a calculated anti-Netanyahu move, and an indirect expression of anger. It had a very specific domestic political purpose: giving Trump and only Trump all of the credit as a way to deny Netanyahu any of it.

If you follow the Hebrew-language X feeds, you would have been alerted to what was afoot. After left-wing journalists, politicians and influencers fell over each other to praise Trump for the deal, right-wing feed retorted with a barrage of screenshots showing how the very same people once used the worst invectives to describe Trump; how they mourned Kamala Harris's defeat; and how they retweeted such iconic signs of the anti-Netanyahu protest as the AI-generated picture of Trump, Netanyahu and Vladimir Putin in orange jail overalls.

One of the chief architects of the "Bring Them Home, Now!" campaign, controversial political strategist Ronen Tzur, who now called Trump "Israel's hero," had previously called him "Donald Adolf Trump."

To read this crowd, you needed to understand the paradoxical nature of its celebration. The hostage deal was a realization of its declared aim, but it was also the painful defeat of its larger political strategy—because the main goal of the "Bring Them Home, Now!" campaign was never really the hostages. It was designed to harness the raw pain felt by a whole country in the service of the continued effort of the lavishly funded permanent protest to oust Netanyahu.

In fact, when you look at the way the campaign was managed, an even darker picture emerges: It was an attempt to remove Netanyahu from power at the expense of the hostages and their families.

One telling sign is that the campaign refrained from any demand to put pressure on Hamas. The first hostage deal was achieved by withholding aid, while stepping up military pressure.

The campaigners never demanded the use of these effective tools to achieve another deal. They never even campaigned for Red Cross visits to the tunnels where our hostages were held in subhuman conditions.

Its strategists, advisers and supporters—including the chorus of the press that was its de facto PR service—advocated consistently against military pressure, based on the premise that hostages would be at risk of execution by their Hamas captors if the Israel Defense Forces closed in on where they were held.

This became an article of faith, despite its refutation by both logic and experience. It made no sense for Hamas operatives to discard their insurance policy, which is why, as released hostages reported, they were kept alive in tunnels, even as IDF forces were heard operating overhead.

Then there was the constant pressure from the campaign to make concessions to Hamas. Naturally, this encouraged Hamas to persevere, in the hope that the demonstrators would force the government to capitulate, or at the very least, exacerbate the rifts in Israeli society, weakening its resolve. You don't need to be an expert on game theory to understand that shouting "now, now, now" to your own side's negotiators only encourages the other side to raise its price.

Even the campaign's slogan designated the Israeli government as the culprit. Unlike the 1970s' "Let My People Go!" campaign, which directed its slogan at those holding Jews captive—in that case the Soviet Union, which refused to grant them exit visas—the "Bring Them Home, Now!" campaign addresses its slogans to the Israeli government, not Hamas, implying that it was actually up to us, had we really wanted a deal. Which was clearly not the case.

Why was all this not obvious to the rank-and-file who attended the anti-Netanyahu rallies? The answer lies with the press's impressive persistence in sustaining the lie that Netanyahu, not Hamas, kept sabotaging the deal.

Despite clear evidence that Hamas demanded conditions no Israeli government could acquiesce to, and in the face of repeated testimonies from both Biden administration and Trump administration officials, who laid the blame clearly at the feet of Hamas—and even in direct contradiction to the fact that Netanyahu had managed to return most of the hostages long before the final deal—the campaigners clung to the refrain that the prime minister had decided to "forsake the hostages."

Of all the cynical political campaigns this country has seen, surely this was the most coldblooded. Had the government yielded to the pressure and agreed to Hamas's conditions, we might have brought back a handful of hostages at the cost of losing all leverage for returning the rest. Which means that this reckless strategy for defeating Netanyahu would, in reality, have sacrificed hostages for the cause.

The rank-and-file in the streets and on social media are, for the most part, true believers. They did not make these calculations. They probably believed former prime minister and longtime Netanyahu rival, Ehud Barak, when he said that "toppling Netanyahu is a necessary precondition for the return of all the hostages."

But they were also not totally naïve. Because they were never single-issue demonstrators. The hostage issue was, for them, only one among many reasons to oust Netanyahu. They knew full well that a hostage deal was not just an end, but also a means to defeating Netanyahu's coalition. For them, toppling Netanyahu is the magic cure for all our ills.

One can thus understand their frustration: The deal had delivered the hostages without ridding the country of Netanyahu. Worse, it deprived them of their most potent political weapon against him.

What could they do now, in Hostages Square, except vent their frustration by booing the prime minister who brought the hostages home and called the lie in the name of which they had been swearing for two long years? (JNS Oct 16)

'We are Witnessing a Type of Civil War in Gaza'

By Yaakov Lappin

In the wake of the ceasefire agreement that has seen the Israel Defense Forces redeploy to new defensive lines in the Gaza Strip, Hamas has launched a brutal campaign to reassert its control over the parts of the Strip it holds, including the heart of Gaza City.

This effort has included ruthless suppression of dissent, leading to intense firefights with armed Gazan clans, and a wave of executions. The terror group's actions signal an explicit rejection of the deal's demilitarization clauses and the notion of a future governance arrangement that is free of Hamas influence.

Col. (res.) Amit Assa, a former senior member of the Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet) with more than 30 years of experience, told JNS in recent days that "Hamas's control, in the areas from which the IDF withdrew, is full control. There will be no local force that can stand against them, and any international force that receives a mandate to intervene will face significant security challenges."

Assa pointed to recent declarations by Hamas leadership as proof

the group has no intention of abiding by either the spirit or letter of the ceasefire.

"The statement by Khalil al-Hayya, who says that Hamas will continue to strengthen and establish its grip as its vision has not changed and is the destruction of the State of Israel, only proves Hamas's disagreement with Trump's conditions in the deal, in which the organization must disarm," he assessed.

"This disagreement and the violent behavior on the ground will lead to another political attempt to impose the conditions on Hamas, and as expected, its refusal will bring about a renewed phase of the war, leading to Hamas's complete surrender with the backing of the Trump administration," said Assa.

The anti-Hamas militias located in the areas under Israeli military control will continue to manage the lives of Gazans in these areas and will constitute the infrastructure for establishing a regional "emirates plan" in the Gaza Strip and also in Judea and Samaria, according to the former Shin Bet official.

On Tuesday, U.S. President Donald Trump said Hamas "did take out a couple of gangs that were very bad," adding, "That didn't bother me much, to be honest with you."

However, he continued, Hamas "will disarm." The terrorist group "know I'm not playing games ... and if they don't disarm, we will disarm them, and it'll happen quickly and perhaps violently, but they will disarm," he said.

Lt. Col. (res.) Shaul Bartal, a senior research fellow at the Begin Sadat Center for Strategic Studies at Bar-Ilan University who has served in multiple security roles in Judea and Samaria, characterized the internal fighting as a form of Palestinian civil war.

"We are witnessing a type of civil war where anyone who does not agree with Hamas is immediately labeled a 'supporter of the occupation.' This civil war, in which Naim Naim, the son of [senior Hamas member] Bassem Naim, was killed [on Sunday], is one stage in Hamas's return to power," Bartal told JNS.

Bartal noted that widespread criticism of Hamas by the Gaza population due to the immense destruction in the Strip will complicate the group's efforts to reimpose its authority.

"On the ground, this will translate into difficulty for Hamas in imposing its rule. It is possible that Israel is encouraging this, but there is no official confirmation of this," he said.

He identified the primary opposition families engaged in the fighting as the Dughmush, Abu Samra and Abu Warda clans. The Israeli-backed Abu Shabab militia is believed to still be operating in southern Gaza, in areas under IDF control.

Bartal said that a government of technocrats is supposed to be established in Gaza, which will be "supervised by Qatar, Turkey and the Gulf states, because only in this way will the money be transferred for reconstruction."

Under this scenario, Bartal added, the Palestinian Authority would have a nominal presence, allowing its leader, Mahmoud Abbas, to claim that Gaza is still part of his domain, "but in practice, nothing would move forward without Hamas's agreement."

Hamas forces have murdered dozens of Gazan clan members since the start of the ceasefire, according to international media reports. The clashes are concentrated in Jabalia in northern Gaza and Deir al-Balah in the central part of the Strip, according to the reports.

Hamas sources have announced a wide-ranging "security operation" to "eradicate collaborators with Israel," targeting powerful opposition clans. This bloody campaign, which Hamas has branded "Purification before Liberation," has involved public executions in Gaza City, often in front of a cheering crowd.

The fighting has been particularly intense in the Sabra neighborhood of Gaza City between Hamas security forces and the Dughmush clan. Al Jazeera and local media reported that Hamas security forces claimed to have taken control of the clan's "militia," arresting around 60 armed men and killing more than 50 others, while suffering at least dozen casualties among their own ranks.

The violence has claimed high-profile casualties, including Saleh al-Jafarawi, a prominent Gazan social media activist who produced Hamas propaganda and celebrated the Oct. 7, 2023 massacre. He was reportedly shot and killed during the fighting. (JNS Oct 16)