

Palestine: Two Myths About the Gaza Ceasefire

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There are two conspicuous myths about the Gaza ceasefire that went into effect last Sunday. The first myth attributes the agreement to pressure from Donald Trump, who had expressed his desire to have it done before he took office, and even threatened to bring "hell" (as if what the people of Gaza had experienced for 471 days had not been hell) if the ceasefire did not happen on the desired date. Of course, Trump's team exerted real pressure to reach a truce (which is the appropriate name of what started on Sunday), but the myth is in portraying this pressure as consisting in twisting Netanyahu's arm, to the point that Trump got depicted by various sources as a hero who would achieve a just peace for the Palestinian people.

The truth is that this myth is complete nonsense! As if the US president who performed the greatest service to Israel before his successor, Joe Biden, completed his act, and who has now returned to the presidency surrounded by a crew of Christian and Jewish Zionists, some of whom are almost standing on Netanyahu's right; as if this man, the leader of the global far right and a politician steeped in bottomless reactionary politics, had magically, or perhaps divinely, transformed into an anti-Zionist and a supporter of the Palestinian people.

The reality is that it was clear to everyone - and to Biden in the first place, who publicly reproached Netanyahu for it after receiving him in Washington last July - that the Israeli prime minister's refusal to move forward with the agreement that the US administration had drafted with the help of Cairo and Doha since last spring, was primarily to deprive Biden, as well as Kamala Harris after she replaced the latter as the Democratic Party's candidate, from an achievement that they could pride themselves with in the presidential race. It was also clear that Netanyahu, who visited Trump at his Florida mansion after his visit to Washington, promised the latter that he would grant him a truce if he won the elections. After his meeting with Trump, Netanyahu stated to reporters that he was "certainly eager" to reach an agreement, adding: "we're working on it".

Netanyahu actually used the myth of Trump's pressure on him - which the latter's representative to the Middle East, Steve Witkoff, a Zionist par excellence, was keen to substantiate - to convince his allies in the Zionist far right to accept the agreement. While the media was silent, or almost silent, about the actual pressure that was being exerted on Hamas through Egypt and Qatar, at the insistence of Trump's representative, the myth prevailed in a way that suited Netanyahu. He nevertheless promised Smotrich and Ben-Gvir that the agreement would not go beyond its first stage. Smotrich accepted the promise, while Ben-Gvir resigned from the government, saying that he would continue to support Netanyahu in the Knesset and that he would return to the government as soon as the war in Gaza resumed.

The commanders of the Zionist armed forces were lobbying for the agreement, in response to pressure from the Israeli public to release the hostages held in the Strip. Former Minister of Defence Yoav Gallant even resigned in protest at Netanyahu's procrastination in accepting the agreement. They all know that this agreement is nothing more than a temporary truce that will allow the release of the civilian hostages, and that the army will continue its campaign after that. Of course, Hamas's ostensible deployment of armed men, with much zeal, in trying to show that they still control the residents of the Strip, is the strongest possible incentive for the Zionist army and society to continue the war and the occupation! Anyone who believes that the current truce will morph into a final cessation of the war, accompanied by a complete withdrawal of the Zionist army from the Strip, is indulging in wishful thinking and dreaming.

The second myth is somewhat related to the first, by portraying the current truce as a great victory achieved by Hamas. Last Saturday, the movement issued a press statement in which it asserted: "The Battle of Al-Aqsa Flood has brought us closer to the end of the occupation, liberation, and return, God willing." This is a new example of the irrational magical thinking that accompanied the 7 October 2023 operation, which constituted a prelude to the ugliest and most terrible chapter in the long tragedy suffered by the Palestinian people. It also led to the collapse of Hamas's allies in the "Axis of Resistance": Hezbollah has been dealt a decisive blow in Lebanon, the Assad regime collapsed in Syria, and the Iranian regime has become terrified, so that only the Yemeni Houthis Ansar Allah remained on the field, exploiting their launching of missiles in their sectarian conflict with the other Yemenis and the Saudi kingdom. The Houthis are best represented by their military spokesman Yahya Saree, who has become a new symbol of Arab fanfaronade after Ahmed Said [Egyptian broadcaster at the time of Gamal Abdel-Nasser] and Muhammad Saeed al-Sahhaf [Saddam Hussein's spokesman] and even surpasses them in ridicule.

In front of the formidable genocide that the people of Gaza have been subjected to (there is little doubt that the total number of dead, including those who died due to the conditions created by the invasion, exceeds two hundred thousand, not to mention the number of those affected with all kinds of permanent physical and psychological injuries, which is certainly greater); of the Strip's reoccupation by the Zionist army after nearly twenty years of its withdrawal from it, thus allowing for the self-administration of Gaza; its destruction in a way that history has not witnessed anywhere on such a scale since World War II; the destruction of its environment and other requisites of life; the release of hundreds of detainees in Israeli prisons coinciding with the arrest or re-arrest of thousands; and the escalation of the fascist attack by the Zionist government and settlers in the West Bank and their creeping annexation of it - in front of this huge catastrophe, for anyone to claim that what happened is a victory for the people of Palestine that brought them "closer to the end of the occupation, liberation, and return" is beyond nonsense, a manifestation of lack of shame and decency.

It is likely that Trump will return to the "Deal of the Century" that his Zionist son-in-law formulated during his first presidential term, which the Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority itself had rejected for its great injustice to Palestinian rights. A similar formula related to Gaza is being prepared to be added to the "deal" with the aid of the United Arab Emirates, which is readying to send troops to the Strip to buttress the role of Mohammed Dahlan as its overseer. [Dahlan is a former chief of one of the PLO security services and the main organizer of the failed attempt to suppress Hamas in Gaza in 2007, backed by the US administration of George W. Bush. He ended up in exile in the UAE.] As for Trump's goal in this, it is to complete the liquidation of the Palestinian cause in order to pave the way for comprehensive normalization between the Zionist state and remaining Arab states, foremost among them the Saudi kingdom, and to maximise his personal and family interests in real "deals of the century" in real estate and finances with the Arab oil countries.

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