

Haaretz | Opinion

# Opinion | How Would Israel Respond if Trump Called for Death Camps in Gaza?

Thursday 13 February 2025, by [LEVY Gideon](#) (Date first published: 12 February 2025).

**And what if U.S. President Donald Trump suggested setting up death camps for the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip? What would happen then? Israel would respond exactly as it did to his transfer ideas, with ecstasy on the right and indifference in the centrist camp.**

*U.S. President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the Oval Office on February 4, 2025. Credit: AFP/ANDREW CABALLERO-REYNOLDS*

Yair Lapid would announce that he would go to Washington to present a “complementary plan,” like he offered to do with regard to the transfer plan. Benny Gantz would say that the plan shows “creative thinking, is original and interesting.” [Bezalel Smotrich](#), with his messianic frame of mind, would say, “God has done wonders for us and we rejoice.” [Benjamin Netanyahu](#) would rise in public opinion polls.

The issue is [no longer a hypothetical](#) one. Trump will not explicitly suggest death camps, but he has already consented to Israel’s [continuing a war](#) that is not a war but rather a barbaric assault on a desolate stretch of land. From there, the road to annihilation is short, and Israel will not bat an eye. Trump approved it. After all, no one in Israel rose up to tell the president of the United States “thank you for your ideas, but Israel will never support the expulsion of the Gaza Strip’s Palestinians.”

Hence, why be confident that if Trump suggested annihilating anyone refusing to evacuate Gaza, Israel would not cooperate with him? Just as Trump exposed the transfer sentiment beating in the heart of almost every Israeli, aimed at [solving the problem “once and for all,”](#) he may yet expose a darker element, the sentiment of “it’s us or them.”

It’s no coincidence that a shady character like Trump has become a guide for Israel. He is exactly what we wanted and dreamed about: a whitewasher of crimes. He may well turn out to be the American president who caused the most damage ever inflicted on Israel. There were presidents who were tight-fisted with aid, others who were sour on Israel, who even threatening it. There has never been a president who has set out to destroy the last vestiges of Israel’s morality. From here on, anything Trump approves will become Israel’s gold standard.

Trump is now pushing Israel into resuming its attacks on the Gaza Strip, setting impossible terms for Hamas: All the hostages must be returned before Saturday noon, not a minute later, like the mafia does. And if only three hostages are returned, as was agreed upon? The gates of hell will open.

They won’t open only in Gaza, which has already been transformed into hell. They will open in Israel too. Israel will lose its last restraints. Trump gave his permission. But Trump will be gone one day. He may lose interest before that, and Israel will be left with the damage he wrought, damage inflicted by a criminal, leper state.

No public diplomacy or friends will be able to save it if it follows the path of its new ethical oracle. No accusations of [antisemitism](#) will silence the world's shock if Israel embarks on another round of combat in the enclave.

*Palestinians walk past a pile of burning garbage in Gaza City, on Wednesday, Feb. 12, 2025. Credit: Jihad Alshrafi, AP*

One cannot overstate the intensity of the damage. The renewal of attacks on Gaza, with the permission and under the authority of the American administration, must be blocked in Israel. Along with the desperate campaign for returning the hostages, a new campaign must begin, against Trump and his outlandish ideas.

However, not only is there no one who can lead such a campaign, there is also no one who could initiate it. The only battles being waged here now, for the hostages and for the removal of Netanyahu, are important, but they cannot remain the only ones.

The resumption of the "war" is the greatest disaster now facing us, heralding genocide, with no more argument about definitions. After all, what would a "war" look like now, other than an assault on tens of thousands of refugees who have nothing left? What will the halting of humanitarian aid, fuel and medicine and water mean if not genocide? We may discover that the first 16 months of the war were only a starter, the first 50,000 deaths only a prelude.

Ask almost any Israeli and he will say that Trump is a friend of Israel, but Trump is actually Israel's most dangerous enemy now. Hamas and Hezbollah will never destroy it like he will.

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