



Learning from Precedent: Could an International Transitional Authority work for the State of Palestine?

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“If all else fails, immortality can always be assured by spectacular error”.

JK Galbraith

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Executive Summary

The Sharm El-Sheikh peace summit has created an opening: a ceasefire, a pledge to surge humanitarian access, phased Israeli draw-down tied to new security arrangements, and an international commitment to finance recovery and back a transitional administration for Gaza. Those promises are necessary—but not sufficient. This report is written to help UK policymakers turn summit language into deliverable reality: a sequenced, lawful, and legitimate transition that is **Palestinian-led, time-bound, and geared to sovereignty**, not another open-ended trusteeship by another name.

Fulfilling the summit's commitments requires hard architecture, not aspirational communiqués. That means a Chapter VII mandate with a clear end-state; a **24–36 month, conditions-based roadmap** to elections and reintegration under re-unified Palestinian institutions; a governing board with a **Palestinian chair and majority**; an enforceable **de-confliction and draw-down framework** for any residual Israeli role; rapid deployment of an **International Stabilisation Force** under defined rules of engagement and a **Joint Security Coordination Centre**; and a comprehensive **DDR/SSR** track that moves armed actors into accountable policing—so no parallel armed structures endure. Above all, it means ending the blockade logic: without freedom of movement and an economy that can breathe, a new cycle of violence will be incubated.

The summit was silent or ambiguous on pillars that decide success. This report sets them out plainly: a constitutional basis for transitional authority and law-making anchored in Palestinian sovereignty; a **transitional-justice** pathway (documentation, reparations, due process) and a **property and restitution** regime to govern return and rebuilding; **guardrails against profiteering** in reconstruction (open contracting, beneficial-ownership transparency, conflict-of-interest rules); a single, coherent reconstruction lead with public performance dashboards to close the **mandate–resource gap**; and full linkage of Gaza's track to the **West Bank and East Jerusalem**, with meaningful participation of women and youth under **UNSCR 1325**. These are not add-ons; they are the difference between a pause and a durable peace based on parity of esteem and the rule of law.

What follows distils lessons from precedent, identifies eight priority challenges, and offers six concrete recommendations, supported by two annexes: a readiness checklist for any transitional authority and a gap analysis of the current GITA blueprint. If the summit was the political green light, this is the **build sheet**: who does what, in what order, under what authority, with what money, and to what measurable end. Deliver the summit—and more—by making the transition **tightly mandated, locally owned, disciplined in scope, transparently financed, and time-bound**. Anything less risks reproducing an expensive, contested trusteeship that cannot command public legitimacy and will fail Palestinians and Israelis alike.

Drawing on case studies from Bosnia, Kosovo, Timor-Leste, Iraq, Afghanistan, and other post-conflict settings, the report identifies key lessons and risks relevant to the proposed Gaza International Transitional Authority (GITA) and broader transitional processes. The paper is a

rapid analysis response to the unfolding situation and covers the conceptual framing, historical precedents, operational recommendations, outlining critical pre-conditions for legitimacy, governance, security, justice, and reconstruction. It should be noted at the outset that the situation in Gaza is unique. Iraq had been under a sanctions regime prior to the 2003 invasion but Gaza has been blockaded by Israel since 2005, intensifying after 2007 take over by Hamas. Whatever happens next it cannot be a return to the status quo ante of 6th October 2023 of a blockaded Gaza otherwise a new cycle of violence will be incubated.

As mentioned, two annexes complement the main analysis. **Annex 1** provides a diagnostic checklist assessing the current readiness of the State of Palestine (comprising Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem) for any transitional arrangement. It benchmarks the presence or absence of essential elements such as an UN-mandated peace framework, financing architecture, institutional capacity, security governance, and citizen participation - effectively serving as a gap analysis. **Annex 2** offers a preliminary assessment of the proposed GITA as a standalone structural blueprint, evaluating its strengths, omissions, and potential risks based on a close reading of the text. It highlights five core deficiencies - the absence of a constitutional basis for Palestinian sovereignty, electoral roadmap, transitional-justice provisions, property and asset-ownership framework, and safeguards against foreign profiteering - while also noting structural strengths in oversight, fiduciary control, and security coordination. Together, these annexes signpost the practical and normative design issues that any credible transition mechanism must address.

They underpin the six main recommendations; four key lessons and eight priority challenges identified in the process of transition. The most urgent challenges facing the people of Gaza in the immediate aftermath of Israel's genocidal war are food and security. While this paper does not address the current humanitarian crisis, famine, or emergency security needs, the authors acknowledge from the outset that ensuring human security remains the foremost priority in Palestine today.

Recommendations

It is expected that all other punitive measures, past and ongoing, taken by Israel that act against Palestinian interests in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, would need to cease. Most recently this includes the genocidal war and human made famine, the pernicious restrictions on the delivery of humanitarian aid, the unprecedented attack on UNRWA and its staff and the wider UN system; the lack of prosecution of those Israeli settlers committing crimes in the West Bank;; the unilateral suspensions by Israel of transfers of clearance revenue required for PA viability; and the withholding of assurances it will continue to extend the indemnifications for essential correspondent banking relationships between Israeli and Palestinian banks.

In addition, to make any transitional authority viable, the following pre-conditions are critical:

1. Political End-State and Legitimacy

- **A clear, time-bound end-state anchored in Palestinian sovereignty, self-determination, and democratic renewal**, culminating in elections.
- **A 24–36 month, conditions-based transition roadmap**, setting sequenced milestones for municipal and national elections and for reintegration with the Palestinian Authority.
- **Expanded Palestinian representation and leadership within the Transitional Authority (e.g., GITA Board)** — a Palestinian majority and chair, transparent selection criteria, and no pre-named international figures to ensure legitimacy and reduce politicisation.
- **Israel must relinquish its financial stranglehold over the Palestinian economy.**
- **All of the above is predicated** on the assumption that lasting peace requires **Israel losing its allied impunity** and the International Community uniting to enforce international law on all parties to the conflict.

2. Governance, Oversight, and Accountability

- **A sequenced, benchmarked transition plan** conditioning donor support on demonstrable progress in governance, justice, and service delivery — rather than on arbitrary timetables and applied on the basis of parity of esteem of both sides.
- **Independent oversight and transparency mechanisms**, including external audit, open contracting standards, and a **public performance dashboard** (e.g., electricity/water availability, clinic reopening, permit backlogs, crime rates).
- **Local presence and communications** capacity from Day 1 through municipal liaison teams and community advisory councils to prevent remote or detached governance.
- **Immediate access to Gaza for international observers and media**

3. Security and Rule of Law

- **Immediate Support for ensuring there is no security vacuum in the interim period before an International Security Force is stood up.**
- **Full accountability for the actions of the IDF** within the areas of Gaza it continues to control and for any operations it carries across the line of withdrawal.

- A **Joint Directive on Security Authority and Command**, defining who decides what within the Joint Security Coordination Centre (JSCC), escalation and tie-break procedures, and the chain of command for the Executive Protection Unit.
- Establishment of a **Corrections and Custody Service** under independent inspection, codifying the chain from arrest to arraignment to detention, with appropriate facilities and case management systems.
- A comprehensive **DDR/SSR (Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration / Security Sector Reform) programme**, defining eligibility, vetting, incentives, and psychosocial and livelihood support, and linking demobilised personnel to Civil Police recruitment to prevent parallel armed structures.

4. Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordination

- Full integration of humanitarian operations through a **Joint Humanitarian Access Platform**, hard-wired into existing UN mechanisms (notably UNRWA) to avoid duplication and clarify clearance responsibilities.
- A **single, coherent reconstruction lead**: Reconstruction Supervision to set standards and assurance, with Gaza Investment Promotion and Economic Development Authority (GIPEDA) or something equivalent as the delivery and investment arm — overseen by one **programme integrator** responsible for sequencing and coordination.
- **Realistic financing and sustained political backing**, ensuring mandates are matched by resources and avoiding the “mandate–resource gap” that has undermined past missions.

5. Justice, Property, and Rights Protection

- Rapid operationalisation of a **Property Rights Preservation Unit**, under judicial supervision and supported by independent legal aid, a “do no harm” policy, a grievance mechanism, and data protection safeguards.
- Development of a **transitional and restorative justice framework**, ensuring due process, addressing wartime crimes and abuses, and providing victims with access to remedy.

6. Integration with the Wider Palestinian Context

- Full linkage of **humanitarian, reconstruction, and political tracks** across the State of Palestine, ensuring coherence and national ownership rather than fragmentation.
- **Clarity of roles and responsibilities** across all stakeholders — Palestinian, regional, and international — to avoid overlap, duplication, or external micromanagement.
- **Roadmap for the end of illegal military occupation of Occupied Palestinian State** and/ land swaps, in line with ICJ Advisory opinions.

Purpose and Scope

This paper examines whether an internationally mandated transitional authority could provide a viable pathway from conflict to sovereignty across the State of Palestine Drawing on precedents from Bosnia, Kosovo, Timor-Leste, Iraq, Afghanistan and other complex post-

conflict environments, it distils lessons for the detailed design of a Gaza International Transitional Authority (GITA) capable of restoring governance, rebuilding institutions, and achieving legitimate Palestinian self-determination.

Transitions of this nature are never linear: they tend to overrun in time and cost, often lack legitimacy, and frequently fail when there is no clearly defined political horizon. Yet if a transitional authority is to be considered at all, it must be tightly mandated, locally owned, politically sequenced, and strategically aligned with both Palestinian aspirations and international law.

Key Lessons from Precedent

Historical experience underlines five recurring risks:

1. **Ambiguous Mandates** – Missions without a clearly defined end-state (Bosnia, Kosovo) drift indefinitely and lose legitimacy.
2. **Resource–Mandate Mismatch** – Expansive objectives without adequate funding, misdirected funding, or political backing lead to disillusionment (Afghanistan, Iraq).
3. **Weak Local Agency** – External control erodes legitimacy; success depends on local participation and a credible handover (Bosnia).
4. **Fragmented Governance** – Overlapping international, national, and local mandates create bureaucratic paralysis.
5. **Neglected Justice and Inclusion** – Failure to address fundamental injustices, accountability for crimes, property rights, or social trauma undermines reconciliation and state-building.

These lessons frame the central question for Gaza: can an interim administration avoid becoming another externally managed trusteeship—expensive, contested, and politically sterile?

Eight Priority Challenges for Gaza

- **Mandate and Legitimacy:** An UN-mandated Chapter VII framework must define the GITA's functions—security, crossings, humanitarian access, reconstruction, accountability, and fiscal stability—while embedding Palestinian representation and guaranteeing transparency, oversight, and independent grievance mechanisms.
- **Security and the IDF Presence:** **Any remaining Israeli involvement should operate under a clearly defined, internationally supervised plan that prevents clashes with other forces and sets out specific steps and timelines for Israel's complete withdrawal.** Security should transition to a vetted Gaza Civil Police and a multinational stabilisation force operating under clear rules of engagement and public benchmarks. There should be no security vacuum at any stage.
- **Linkages with the West Bank and East Jerusalem:** Gaza's future cannot be isolated from the broader political settlement. Parallel measures are needed to unify administrative structures, curb settler violence, and preserve the territorial and political integrity of the State of Palestine.

- **Governance and Reconstruction:** Reconstruction should operate through a four-window financial architecture (PA fiscal stability, GITA administration, security operations, and reconstruction finance). Transparent procurement, local contracting, and maintenance budgets are essential to avoid the waste and duplication that plagued Iraq and Afghanistan.
- **Political Unification:** The transitional period must be used to rebuild unified Palestinian institutions, harmonise civil-service systems, and prepare for credible elections leading to reintegration under the Palestinian Authority.
- **Transitional Justice:** A hybrid accountability mechanism combining documentation, reparations, and victim-centred processes should address war crimes, property restitution, and detention abuses—avoiding both blanket amnesties and politicised prosecutions.
- **Service Delivery and Infrastructure:** Immediate, visible improvements in power, water, health, and education build trust and confidence. A Service Delivery Compact with measurable targets and maintenance funding should underpin reconstruction.
- **Social and Psychological Recovery:** The trauma of siege, war, and displacement demands early integration of mental-health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) into all sectors, alongside programmes for youth, women, and livelihoods to prevent social collapse.

Introduction and Context

A Gaza International Transitional Authority (GITA) is being floated as a potential bridge between war and sovereignty in the Gaza Strip. In theory, such a mechanism could help move from conflict toward stable Palestinian self-rule – but only under strict conditions. It must not become an external trusteeship imposed from abroad; rather, it needs to be a Palestinian-led, internationally supported arrangement, focused on security for all, reconstruction and reunification. There can be no return to a blockaded Gaza that is separated from the rest of the State of Palestine by Israel to ensure that a Palestinian political economy cannot develop. Without a clear mandate, genuine local agency, and binding commitments to Palestinian rights and self-determination, a GITA would risk repeating the costly failures of past international interventions. History has shown that these efforts often begin with grand expectations and massive expenditures, only to lose legitimacy over time if they sideline local stakeholders. The overriding lesson from thirty years of post-conflict governance is that transitions succeed when they are locally owned, limited in mandate, disciplined in scope, and backed by sustained political will. Anything less will entrench dependency, prolong instability in Gaza (as well as the West Bank and East Jerusalem), and ultimately create new threats to Israel’s security.

After years of conflict – including a devastating two-year war that killed tens of thousands and displaced much of Gaza’s population – there seemed to be no end in sight to the misery of Palestinians, especially those in Gaza. Now, a glimmer of hope has emerged. In early October 2025, Israel and Hamas agreed to an initial ceasefire and hostage exchange deal as part of a broader 20-point peace plan led by the United States. This plan, unveiled by U.S. President Donald Trump and endorsed by key regional powers, calls for an immediate halt to the fighting, the release of all hostages held by Hamas, and a phased withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza. In exchange, Israel released a large number of Palestinian hostages. Hamas freed the 20

remaining hostages (and will eventually return the remains of those who were killed), while Israel freed several hundred Palestinian hostages. Israeli troops, in turn, pulled back to agreed positions as a first step toward a broader pullout. These moves – a humanitarian pause, hostage exchange, and partial troop withdrawal – are designed to build initial confidence on both sides. They also mark the first tangible progress toward ending the war, offering Gaza’s civilians a respite from the daily bombardment. Celebrations and cautious optimism erupted both in Gaza and in Israel at this tentative peace. However, officials on all sides acknowledge that the agreement is fragile. It represents only the first phase, and its success will depend on resolving the complex diplomatic challenge that comes next.

Crucially, the Trump plan envisions a new governance arrangement for post-war Gaza. A central plank of the peace initiative is that Hamas will have *no role* in Gaza’s future administration. Instead, Gaza would be managed by a temporary international-backed governing authority – effectively the proposed Gaza International Transitional Authority (GITA or something like it) – with support from Arab states and international security forces. In parallel, a more detailed blueprint for Gaza’s interim administration has been gaining traction, referred to as the “Blair plan” for GITA. This proposal, reportedly backed by Washington and several Arab capitals, calls for a technocratic interim government acceptable to both Palestinians and the international community. Under this plan, former British Prime Minister Tony Blair would head a transitional governing body for up to a five-year period. The GITA would serve as Gaza’s supreme political and legal authority during the transition. Early reports indicate the design draws on lessons from previous international administrations in places like East Timor and Kosovo – for example, the GITA might initially operate from nearby Egypt and later deploy into Gaza alongside an UN-endorsed multinational force (largely composed of troops from Islamic States)¹ to ensure security on the ground. The ultimate goal, according to this plan, is the eventual unification of Gaza and the West Bank under the Palestinian Authority (PA) once certain, unspecified, reforms are achieved. President Mahmoud Abbas of the PA has signalled conditional support for an interim arrangement: he accepts the principle of an international transitional authority so long as it clearly paves the way for the PA’s return to governance in Gaza. Indeed, any transitional administration would presumably be formally authorised by a UN Security Council resolution under Chapter VII,² lending it international legal legitimacy and outlining its mandate. Arab states have expressed willingness to fund Gaza’s reconstruction and contribute to a peacekeeping force – but they insist on a credible political horizon toward Palestinian statehood. A key point of contention remains the timeline: the UN General Assembly recently endorsed a separate plan for a one-year technocratic administration leading directly to PA elections, whereas the U.S.-backed Blair plan contemplates a longer period (potentially several years) of international oversight. It is unclear, at the time of writing, if this also involves the lifting of the blockade of Gaza by Israel or if that happens at a later date or indeed, if it never happens. This lack of a clear

¹ This may also require an examination of whether the existing EU Police Mission, EUPOL COPPS, could be expanded

² Thereby authorising the Security Council to go beyond peaceful dispute resolution and take decisive action to maintain or restore international peace and security.

timetable for restoring Palestinian sovereignty is a major threat to the viability of the peace process, underscoring the importance of balancing firm international guarantees with local expectations and ensuring that Israel conforms with its obligations under International Law.

The international community's experience with post-conflict transitions offers both encouragement and caution for Gaza's path ahead. On one hand, there is a wealth of expertise from supporting countries through transitions from war to peace and from authoritarian rule to more inclusive governance. From the Balkans to Afghanistan, and from East Timor to Liberia, various models of interim administration, peacekeeping, and state-building have been tried. These cases show that transitions are rarely straightforward or linear – especially in regions as volatile as the Middle East. Continuing local and regional instability, and 'spoilers' can easily derail progress if not managed carefully. By design, transitional operations must be phased and conditional. They often involve sequenced steps: securing an initial peace, deploying interim security arrangements, rebuilding essential basic services and infrastructure, then reforming institutions, and eventually holding elections. Each phase typically hinges on meeting specific benchmarks in governance and security rather than simply following an arbitrary timeline. Effective support to a transition therefore means tackling urgent short-term needs (such as ceasefire monitoring, ensuring human security, humanitarian relief, and demobilization of combatants and decommissioning of their weapons) *while simultaneously* pushing forward longer-term reforms like building accountable institutions, stimulating economic recovery, and fostering inclusive political dialogue. Experience shows that progress is most sustainable when multiple tracks – security, political, economic, and social – advance in parallel, reinforcing each other. For instance, improvements in daily life and reconstruction can bolster public confidence in a peace process, just as political concessions or power-sharing deals can reduce the incentives for violence. International aid and recognition can be tied to milestones, e.g. creating a unified security force or holding municipal elections to incentivise the parties to stay on course. Discipline in scope and coordination is also vital: external actors must resist mission creep and respect local decision-making, even as they help steer the process. And above all, local ownership is key – if ordinary Gazans and the broader Palestinian public do not see the transition as serving their aspirations for freedom and dignity, it will not succeed. Even if all the above is successfully carried out the scope for Israel to act as spoiler remains defining.

If the Trump framework indeed moves forward to an UN-mandated intervention in Gaza, significant challenges lie immediately ahead. The current ceasefire and hostage exchange, while a major breakthrough, is just the beginning and at the time of writing there is little detail on what if anything comes next. In the coming weeks, negotiators will need to tackle the thorniest questions:

- How will Gaza be governed during the transition, and by whom?
- Can a transitional authority be structured in a way that empowers competent Palestinian technocrats and leaders without empowering Hamas - a red flag for Israeli spoilers tactics?
- Hamas accept disarmament, decommissioning and exclusion from governance, or will it reject and sabotage the process?

- What security arrangements will ensure that violence does not reignite – will an international force be deployed, and under what rules of engagement?
- How and when will full sovereignty be handed back to Palestinians, and what conditions must be met first?

Both Israeli and Palestinian leaders have concerns: Israel's government (especially its hardline factions) is wary of seeing Gaza handed back to the Palestinian Authority too quickly if at all, yet Palestinians demand that any interim period clearly leads to their right of self-governance and statehood rather than a prolonged foreign tutelage. These dilemmas will require delicate compromises and robust guarantees. The immediate future will be a critical test of whether the momentum for peace can be maintained. The ceasefire's durability will depend on all parties following through on commitments – the complete release of hostages, restraint by Israeli forces, and the easing of Gaza's humanitarian conditions. Early missteps or breaches of trust could rapidly unravel the agreement and plunge the region back into fighting.

Conversely, if the initial phase holds, it could open space to launch Gaza's reconstruction and implement the transitional governance arrangements discussed above. That will be the moment when lofty plans meet hard reality: deploying administrators and peacekeepers, coordinating massive aid flows, and standing up interim Palestinian institutions in Gaza's shattered landscape. Each of these steps will come with pitfalls – from potential power vacuums and factional rivalries to the sheer scale of rebuilding needed after widespread destruction.

In the sections that follow, we begin by clarifying what is meant by “transition” in this context – politically, legally, and operationally. We then examine past experiences with post-conflict transitions and peacebuilding (including international interventions and domestic power-sharing arrangements) to draw out concrete guidance. Finally, we apply these insights to the unique context of Gaza, outlining key recommendations to give all parties the best chance of achieving a durable peace and a lasting political settlement. The stakes could not be higher: with careful planning, local empowerment, and unwavering international commitment, Gaza's transition could set the stage for a broader Israeli-Palestinian peace; but if mishandled, it could simply entrench the divisions and grievances that have fuelled decades of conflict. The path forward must be navigated with both realism and resolve.

Defining what is meant by ‘Transition’

‘Transition’ denotes the process of moving from externally driven administration or conflict governance to locally accountable authority. In political, security, and economic terms, it involves a progressive transfer of responsibility for security, service delivery, and decision-making to legitimate local institutions. Successful transitions are gradual, benchmarked, and grounded in inclusive governance and mutual accountability. They fail when mandates are open-ended, authority is fragmented, or legitimacy is externally imposed.

There is no single, agreed definition of the term “transition”:

- The term “*transition*” describes countries and regions that are emerging from armed conflict or violent instability. In these situations, there is also a transition from the external provision of services, towards greater state ownership and responsibility for the safety and welfare of its own people³
- Political Transition is a process of transformation, and in many cases wide ranging reforms, within an environment affected by violent political conflict to an inclusive and more legitimate governing authority
- Security transitions can imply the immediate or progressive transfer of security functions and responsibilities between actors in order to reach a durable level of stability for all parties that is not necessarily dependent on a significant international military contribution. (see for example UK *JDN 6/10 on Security Transitions*⁴)
- Transitions are also supported by International Joint Task Forces dealing with natural and manmade disasters where they have primary responsibility in tackling serious challenges beyond the capabilities of host nations. Here the transition is to National Teams, so they assume gradual responsibility for management, delivery, accountability of funds and reporting.

In a political and security context, ‘Transition’ describes a process of moving towards ‘structural stability’ and therefore often does not have a precise “end state”: it denotes a transfer of capacity, responsibility, ownership and authority from a combination of military and/or civilian bodies to the legitimate local authorities. Transitions are usually gradual⁵, this is not to suggest that there will be full capacity on the part of host nation authorities at the time of transfer but assumes that the situation is sufficiently stable to ensure this process will continue and that there is some capacity to take transitioned initiatives forward. However, as noted previously, there is difficulty in describing what is ‘viable’ or ‘stable enough’.

In situations of active conflict and contested authority, the objective must be to generate and support the necessary national and local political settlements that can eventually lead to transition of authority and responsibilities. Concepts of legitimacy and authority therefore have both a local and a national dimension, never more so in the case of Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Past approaches to securing ‘stabilisation’ can support transition objectives and simultaneously prevent further violence; protect the population; promote sustainable political processes; and prepare for longer term recovery.

Transitions usually take place within a multinational, multiagency approach. In all cases there is a need to consider and plan for processes that will support the progressive transition of authorities/responsibilities, activities, assets and services and particularly those which will leave an enduring resource. With regard to the latter, in the case of Gaza this will include major infrastructure investments, an airfield, port, energy plant, water supply, roads, hospitals, etc.

³ International Support to Post-Conflict Transition (p.18, 2012), OECD DAC Guidelines and Reference Series, Paris.

⁴ Joint Doctrine Note 6/10 Security Transitions (p.vi, 2010), Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre, Shrivenham, UK.

⁵ Though there is nothing to stop ‘transition’ of a responsibility or a set of activities at a fixed time depending on the circumstances.

Without considering such elements of transition carefully, including the future operating costs and maintenance, it is possible to throw away successful investments and undermine future stability. Moreover, in the case of Gaza, Israel has to make cast iron pledges that it will not undermine or destroy investments made by the IC.

A great deal of rigorous thinking has already gone into charting the pathways for Gaza's economic reconstruction and for advancing sustainable development in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The UN's current Peacekeeping Operations budget for the 2024-2025 fiscal year is approximately \$5.6 billion⁶, reconstruction needs for Gaza were estimated at \$53 billion in the February 2025 Interim Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (IRDNA) - likely much higher now. Secretary-General Guterres has cautioned against a persistent "mismatch" between mandates and resources, especially where there is little or no peace to keep. For example, the Palestine Emerging⁷ framework consolidates this work by offering a coherent, nationally owned economic vision that connects immediate recovery with long-term transformation. It proposes a shift from dependency-driven aid models toward investment-led growth anchored in Palestinian sovereignty, regional trade integration, and private-sector mobilisation. Within this framework, reconstruction is treated as the foundation for economic renewal—linking the rehabilitation of critical infrastructure to industrial diversification, agricultural modernisation, renewable energy, digital entrepreneurship, and the creation of high-value employment. The approach recognises that effective transition planning must build both physical assets and the institutional capacity to manage them, ensuring that new infrastructure becomes a platform for enterprise, revenue generation, and fiscal autonomy rather than a recurring donor liability. Embedding Gaza's reconstruction within this broader economic architecture—aligned with reforms and investment pipelines across the West Bank and East Jerusalem—would transform transition from a humanitarian exercise into a credible strategy for sustainable statehood. A progressive transfer, therefore, ought to happen simultaneously on several fronts including political, governance, security, economic and social development. A multifaceted approach, grounded in an understanding of the specific context, is required for transition in order to ensure that stabilisation is transformative, successful and sustainable. As a prerequisite, Israel must relinquish its financial stranglehold over the Palestinian economy.

Transition should be linked to strategic benchmarks and goals. Conditionality may be necessary but must be carefully nuanced so as not to create the wrong incentives. Mutual accountability is key. International cooperation is vital to ensure that transition projects do not commence without regard to the activities of others or the relationship between one donor's quick wins and another's contributions to structural reform, a problem that plagued both Federal Iraq and the Kurdish Regional Government.

⁶ Although much cheaper than Peacekeeping operations implemented by the United States. See <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-18-243>. As an aside, current costs of UN Peacekeeping operations equate to approximately 0.5% of global military spending

⁷ *Palestine Emerging: A Framework for Reconstruction and Renewal* (2025). Available at: <https://palestine-emerging.org> (accessed October 2025).

Experience from UNTAES (Croatia), UNTAET (Timor-Leste), UNMIK (Kosovo), Bosnia's Office of the High Representative (OHR), Afghanistan's security transition "Inteqal," Iraq's Coalition Provisional Authority, and post-conflict recovery in Sierra Leone indicates common pitfalls: mandates that outstrip resources; ambiguous end-states; weak local legitimacy; fragmented financing; and inadequate oversight. See Box 1 below.

These precedents shape the recommendations in this report.

Box 1 Examples of Transitional Administrations: political and security

There have been three UN Security Council Chapter VII Transitional Administrations

UNTAES (Croatia) The UN transitional administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (1996-1998): Established to administer a territory in Croatia occupied by rebel Serb forces, UNTAES oversaw its demilitarization, the return of refugees, the establishment of a temporary police force, and the reintegration of the region into Croatia.

UNTAET (East Timor) (1999-2002): Following a referendum on independence, UNTAET was established with full administrative authority to govern East Timor until the establishment of a new government.

UNMIK (Kosovo) 1999-2008: Established to administer Kosovo after the withdrawal of Serbian authorities, UNMIK was tasked with administering the territory while its long-term political status was determined. It was the first UN mission granted full executive powers through a UNSC mandate. In Kosovo, with the UNSC resolution 1244, there remained ambiguity around the status of Kosovo and whether or not it was an internationally recognised state.

Other transitions with significant international engagement

The Dayton Agreement and Bosnia Herzegovina - created the Office of the High Representative to oversee the civilian implementation of the agreement, representing the countries involved in the Dayton Accords through the Peace Implementation Council. The international control over Bosnia and Herzegovina is to last until the country is deemed politically and democratically stable and self-sustainable. The OHR is still in place 30 years later.

Transition (Inteqal) in Afghanistan – The term 'transition' in Afghanistan was used mainly by the IC to describe a transfer of responsibility for maintaining security from NATO-ISAF forces to Afghan military and police units following the planned withdrawal of foreign troops. Following on from a failed approach to instilling good governance in Afghanistan. Subsequent analysis has revealed that the U.S. government was not properly prepared from the outset to help build an Afghan army and police force that was capable of protecting Afghanistan⁸

Iraq Transitional Government – the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) served as the transitional government established in May 2003 under the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1483 (2003) and the laws of war. It was vested with executive, legislative, and judiciary authority over the Iraqi government from the period of the CPA's inception on 21 April 2003 until its dissolution on 28 June 2004. The CPA failed to instil, presided over

⁸ SIGAR (2017) Reconstructing the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces: Lessons from the US Experience in Afghanistan

misappropriated funds and was overshadowed by the search for non-existent weapons of mass destruction. It did not go well⁹.

Experience with transitional administrations has been mixed. The UN itself has recognised that transitions are complex, inherently political and strategic processes.¹⁰ They are extremely expensive administratively, let alone considering the costs of massive reconstruction. Transitions are consistently more expensive and longer than anticipated. Afghanistan, \$2.3 trillion over 20 years and collapsed in 2021,¹¹ Bosnia still under international supervision nearly 30 years on; UNMIK in Kosovo lasted far longer than intended and arguably is still unstable. The implication for Gaza reconstruction is that an open-ended financial commitment is both necessary and perhaps inevitable. Other challenges are generated by poorly drafted and inflexible mandates, inadequate resources and funding, bureaucratic hurdles, deep disagreements among UN Security Council member states, lack of strong local partner capacity, and failure to develop effective security sector reforms.

Missions often deliver surface stability without tackling underlying grievances (the root causes of violence, exclusion, inequality, corruption). In Sierra Leone corruption and mass unemployment persisted after peace; in Iraq despite considerable support from the International Community the country suffered years as a battleground in the turmoil of the Middle East, with sectarian exclusion feeding insurgency and the birth of ISIS; in Bosnia ethnic divisions remain entrenched and still threaten the break-up of the state.

As noted previously ‘transitions’ have lacked clarity on what “success” or a “viable state” meant, creating drift. Kosovo, having declared independence from Serbia in 2008, has received recognition by 108 UN Member States of the United Nations, though a much lower number than have recognised the State of Palestine (157). In Libya, successive ‘Unity’ governments have come and gone despite extensive support from the International Community with no agreed ‘end state’. In contrast, in Timor Leste that was set a clear independence goal, the outcome was relatively more successful.

Forster (2019)¹² identifies a number of potential stumbling blocks during interim transition periods:

- Broken ceasefires
- Power sharing challenges
- Unclear institutional mandates
- Difficulty of managing ‘transitions within transitions’

⁹ Who can forget the pallets of shrink-wrapped \$100 bills which the Bush administration loaded on to Air Force C-17 transport planes in order to prop up the occupation of post-Saddam Hussein Iraq. About \$12bn to \$14bn was sent in the airlift and another \$5bn via electronic transfer.

¹⁰ Security Council Report (2023) UN Transitions in a Fractured Multilateral Environment. Research Report

¹¹ See Brian Brivati (ed), (2022). *Losing Afghanistan: The failure of international intervention and the future of Afghanistan*. Biteback Books.

¹² Forster, R (2019). Interim Governance Arrangements in Post-Conflict and Fragile Settings. Sixth Edinburgh Dialogue on Post-Conflict Constitution-Building

- Governance actors unprepared to exit power at the end of the transition
- Absence of on-the-ground impact
- Difficulties of delay, extension and postponement
- Difficulties of adaptive management¹³

If the proposed GITA is to succeed it will have to address many of these challenges that Gaza has experienced in the past

1. **Broken ceasefires** - Gaza has experienced a repeated collapse of ceasefire agreements—from the fragile understandings following previous escalations to the breakdowns of humanitarian truces throughout 2023–25. Each collapse has deepened mistrust, undermined the credibility of external guarantors, and eroded the foundations for any sustained transition. The absence of a trusted monitoring and enforcement mechanism leaves both sides in a permanent state of insecurity. At the time of writing there is a serious risk of a further security vacuum in Gaza.
2. **Power-sharing challenges** - There is no agreed internal Palestinian framework for power-sharing between Gaza and the West Bank. The Palestinian Authority (PA) claims the right to govern but has no operational presence in Gaza because of the Israel blockade; Hamas retains de facto control; and smaller factions and local militias compete for influence. Successive political agreements and disputes between Fatah and Hamas have failed the Palestinian people. Without an inclusive political compact and credible sequencing of power transfer, any transitional authority will face the same legitimacy contest that derailed previous governance efforts.
3. **Unclear institutional mandates** - Years of fragmentation have produced overlapping and contested mandates. Ministries were duplicated or severed after 2007; the PA’s institutions in Ramallah function largely without Gazan counterparts; and UN agencies, INGOs, and local committees have filled governance vacuums ad hoc or been removed and outlawed by the Israeli government. A transitional authority without clearly delineated responsibilities, including for UNRWA and other UN entities, risks reproducing this administrative confusion rather than resolving it.
4. **Difficulty of managing ‘transitions within transitions’** - The Gaza context embodies multiple, simultaneous transitions—from war to ceasefire, from humanitarian emergency to reconstruction, and from divided governance to potential reunification. Each domain (security, humanitarian, political, institutional) depends on the others, creating a recursive “transition within a transition.” Coordination failures at any level can derail the whole process, as seen in past post-conflict missions.
5. **Governance actors unprepared to exit power at the end of the transition** - Both local and external actors have shown reluctance to relinquish control once authority or resources are secured. The PA seeks a return to Gaza but fears loss of international funding leverage; de facto authorities on the ground resist disarmament and political exclusion; and international sponsors often maintain oversight and influence far beyond

¹³ Examples drawn from peace agreements related to these processes are accessible on the PA-X Peace Agreement Database (<<https://www.peaceagreements.org>>).

planned timelines. Without explicit exit strategies and sunset clauses, a Gaza transitional authority could easily become semi-permanent.

6. **Absence of on-the-ground impact** - Despite large financial pledges after each conflict, Gazan civilians rarely experience tangible improvements in mobility, livelihoods, or basic services. Infrastructure destroyed in one round of hostilities is rebuilt only to be damaged again, but Gazans do show remarkable ability to rebuild. The result is donor fatigue and public cynicism toward international initiatives and the motives of the Israeli government. Unless the next phase delivers visible, credible benefits—clean water, functioning schools, electricity, and increased freedom of movement—trust in any transition will collapse early.
7. **Difficulties of delay, extension, and postponement** - Previous recovery frameworks have been repeatedly delayed or extended, often due to political stalemate and Israeli intervention, security incidents, or donor conditionality. Each postponement compounds humanitarian suffering and weakens the legitimacy of transitional mechanisms. Gaza's extreme volatility makes timeline discipline both essential and exceptionally difficult; any transition plan must include pre-agreed contingency triggers for extension, coupled with strict reporting to avoid open-ended drift.
8. **Difficulties of adaptive management** - Effective transitions depend on the ability to adjust programmes as conditions change. In Gaza, bureaucratic rigidity, restricted access, and Israeli interference have repeatedly blocked adaptive management and international engagement. Real-time learning and course correction, hallmarks of successful transitions elsewhere, are impeded by fragmented data, blockade and other movement restrictions, and the absence of unified governance. Building adaptive capacity into the design of a Gaza transitional authority, through delegated authority, rapid-response funding windows, and integrated monitoring, is therefore essential.

Applying Past Experience to Gaza, East Jerusalem and the West Bank

It is apparent that the problems and failures of past 'transitions' coupled with the tragic past trajectory of the Palestine-Israel conflict poses some unique challenges.

1. Mandate and Legitimacy of GITA

Where mandates were ambiguous or lacked a defined end-state (e.g., prolonged ambiguity over Kosovo's status; Bosnia's extended international oversight), transitions drifted, and legitimacy was eroded. Conversely, Timor-Leste's clearer independence trajectory aided a more decisive transition.

The mandate for GITA has to:

- i. define core functions: public security, borders and crossings facilitation, humanitarian access, essential services, priority reconstruction and methods of support, and economic/fiscal stabilisation;
- ii. precisely clarify the threat to peace, authorize the UN to use air, sea, and land forces as appropriate, propose sanctions as necessary on non-compliance by any of the belligerents;
- iii. set a time-bound horizon and a sequenced transfer to legitimate Palestinian authorities culminating in elections;

- iv. specify limits in regulatory authority to protect sensitive domains;
- v. clarify the status of refugees within Gaza;
- vi. embed Palestinian agency through a Local Advisory Council and representation on a Steering Council; and
- vii. Specify clear reporting lines to the UNSC, as the Council has the authority to take enforcement action under Chapter VII to maintain or restore peace, and would expect to be informed of actions taken

The minimums for legitimacy include cast-iron arrangements with Israel and Egypt on access and movement; public reporting; independent oversight (audit/ombudsperson); a grievance/dispute mechanism; and proactive communications to counter misinformation.

2. Managing the Continuing Presence of the IDF in or near Gaza

Where foreign forces remain without clear de-confliction and accountability, transitional authorities struggle to build legitimacy and deliver on protection. Above and beyond questions of Palestinian sovereignty, any continuing IDF presence requires codified de-confliction, protection of humanitarian corridors and civilians, and an agreed pathway for drawdown tied to security benchmarks. An ISF with a clear mandate and liaison arrangements should handle perimeter security, border integrity, support imported goods clearance and counter-smuggling, while a vetted Gaza Civil Police can assume community safety functions. Publicly reported security benchmarks (incident rates; freedom-of-movement indicators) create shared accountability.

In this respect, the immediate security situation has further complications that need to be considered. Gaza's security landscape has rapidly deteriorated into a fragmented and volatile environment dominated by Israeli-backed militias, challenging Hamas authority, and rising intra-Palestinian violence. Militias like Yasser Abu Shabab's Popular Forces now operate as proto governments, controlling aid and territory while receiving arms and supplies through coordinated Israeli and tribal channels. Concurrently, clan feuds - often ignited by Hamas's internal crackdowns – have escalated into armed clashes, drawing in militias and at times Israeli military support. The result is a multi-sided conflict where control over aid, commerce, and movement is contested by non-state actors, armed families/clans, and dwindling local security forces. This fragmentation increases operational hazards for NGOs and complicates any efforts to stabilise the Strip, as aid becomes a weapon of influence and neutrality collapses under political and military co-option.

Moreover, the security transition would have to be fully supported by Israel, whose past record in supporting reconstruction has been one of a 'spoiler' supporting its own perceived security needs, and maintaining a full blockade on Gaza. Stability in Gaza will not be achieved, until and unless, the siege of Gaza is lifted, and Gazans can live in peace and dignity. Only a realistic post-conflict plan for Gaza can address Israeli security needs. Palestinian concerns would extend to the West Bank and East Jerusalem where communities are also living under extreme Israeli security measures. Given the evident serious security situation, and humanitarian and

development needs of Palestinian refugees the proposals for the Authority would necessitate clarifying what role would be assigned to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and other UN Agencies and I/NGOs.

3. Addressing Issues in the West Bank and East Jerusalem

This highlights the difficulty of the administrative and political separation of the State of Palestine on two planes. Firstly, Following Hamas's victory in the 2006 legislative elections and its forced takeover of Gaza in June 2007, the Palestinian territories experienced a de facto political and administrative split. Two rival governments emerged: a Hamas-led de facto administration in the Gaza Strip and the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority in the West Bank. Because of the Israeli blockade, most Palestinian ministries and government agencies were subsequently divided into parallel structures in Gaza and the West Bank, resulting in severe institutional fragmentation and weakened unified governance. Notably, the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) was a unique exception – it remained the only national institution operating across both territories, continuing to coordinate and deliver water services in Gaza and the West Bank despite the internal divide. Secondly, the Israeli settlement expansions, including recent plans to move ahead with E1, which would effectively cut the West Bank off from East Jerusalem, make the congruent governance of the West Bank extremely difficult even before considering the reunification with Gaza. The UN has documented over 1000 attacks by settlers in 2025 alone.

4. Governance and Reconstruction.

In Iraq, over-centralised decision-making and weak fiduciary controls undermined legitimacy and value for money; in Afghanistan and parts of the Balkans, donor fragmentation produced duplication and short-lived “quick wins.” Transitions that budgeted for operations and maintenance, used transparent procurement, and aligned with local institutions and local plans proved more durable. The implications for Gaza are that GITA should adopt a four-window financing architecture as outlined in prior proposals:

- i. PA Fiscal Stability Facility (public wages; social protection, reform agenda including merging of the civil services, urgent health and education service reforms);
- ii. GITA administrative costs;
- iii. Security/ISF operations; and
- iv. Reconstruction finance with sub-windows (housing, critical infrastructure, MSMEs).

Align funding instruments with IFIs and existing trust funds; institute open contracting and independent audit. Prioritise lifeline infrastructure - power, water, access (air, land and sea), health, logistics, digital, housing, human security and livelihoods. Protect O&M budgets from reallocation. Secure “non-spoiler” guarantees so that international investments are not impeded or destroyed.

5. Political Unification of Palestinian State Structures

Transitions within transitions (Bosnia; fragmented authorities anywhere) complicate consolidation. Attempted sweeping de-Ba'athification, especially in army and security services, in Iraq shows the risks of broad exclusion without due process. Timor-Leste benefited from a clearly sequenced handover to a nationally legitimate authority. The implications for Gaza are to use the transitional period to:

- i. support a Palestinian political roadmap that enables the PA to resume governance in Gaza, with reforms agreed through an inclusive participatory process and the end of the blockade;
- ii. prepare integrated civil-service payrolls and interoperable systems;
- iii. harmonise security sector roles to avoid parallel chains of command; and
- iv. schedule credible, sequenced elections once minimum conditions are met. Interface with the West Bank and East Jerusalem must be explicit—building capacities now that will be needed post-handover.

6. Transitional Justice and Accountability

Hybrid arrangements (e.g., Timor-Leste; Sierra Leone) that combined accountability with reconciliation fared better than blanket amnesties or indiscriminate purges. Bosnia's slow justice processes and Iraq's politicised exclusions illustrate legitimacy risks. The situation in Palestine is of course very different because of the context. Israel, as ally of the west, enjoys allied impunity from statewide sanctions regimes that are used against other states accused of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The impunity of guaranteed by the US.

Implications for Gaza are that in the domestic context, there needs to be established an independent documentation process for alleged violations; design victim-centred reparations; and the adoption of targeted vetting for public service and policing. Coordination with international mechanisms where relevant, while ensuring due process and eliminating collective punishment. Prioritise civil remedies and access to justice for property, detainees, and missing persons. In the context of holding the IDF and Israel leaders to account there needs to be a complete political about face by the US.

7. Reconstruction of Service Delivery

Early, visible service restoration (water, power, waste, health, schooling) builds legitimacy; but sustainability falters when operations and maintenance (O&M) and local revenue mobilisation are ignored. UN agency roles must be clarified early to prevent gaps or duplication.

Implications for Gaza: Conclude a Service Delivery Compact that sets measurable targets (uptime for major infrastructure investments, local power/water, clinic/school reopening, places of worship, solid-waste collection), assigns lead agencies and holds them to account, and ensures financing for maintenance. Digitise beneficiary lists and payments to reduce leakage; expand cash-based assistance where markets permit; and professionalise municipal services with technical partnerships.

8. Social-Psychological Impact of War and Multiple Displacements

Protracted displacement and severe trauma (seen across many post-conflict settings) undermine community cohesion, learning outcomes, and security. Neglecting mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) carries long-term costs.

Implications for Gaza. Integrate MHPSS into health, education, justice, and policing from day one; expand safe learning spaces and accelerated education; support youth employment and community-level social cohesion initiatives; strengthen GBV services; and ensure that policing and justice reforms are trauma-informed. Participation by women and youth must be visible and resourced (UNSCR 1325) needs to be real and not symbolic. In Iraq the UN developed a network of youth clubs and youth councils as part of anti-radicalisation programmes but failed to sustain them or use them effectively as sites of democratic consolidation or sources of social-psychological support..

Conclusion

In the highly contested conflict of Palestine-Israel, the world is watching and wondering if the current ceasefire plan will work. Thousands of Palestinian bodies still lie beneath the rubble; the true costs of reconstruction cannot be known yet. Palestinians need free movement and to be free of a blockade, free to control their own destiny. The investigation processes at both the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) regarding Gaza are ongoing, with the ICJ hearing South Africa's genocide case against Israel and the ICC conducting an investigation into potential war crimes by all parties involved in the conflict.

A key challenge will be the drafting of a fair, just and equitable UNSC resolution. It remains to be seen how the UN Security Council can support the inevitable “primacy of politics”, ensuring that a transitional administration and peace support operations stay focused on and geared to political solutions, with diplomacy, inclusive dialogue and multi-tiered negotiations at the core of its efforts. Given the Israeli and US government’s recent hostility to the United Nations, is this realistic?

A huge amount of work is required before even beginning to assemble a sequenced, prioritised and tailored approach to standing up operations by the Palestinian Authority. As a guideline, the UN can take a long time to stand up a peacekeeping mission. Experience suggests as long as two years to reach full operational capacity, with physical deployment into the field, often taking more than six months after a Security Council resolution.¹⁴ Without clarity, inclusion, expedited decision-making, and sustained commitment, a Gaza transitional authority risks repeating the pattern of previous international interventions: initial hopes, high costs, then disillusionment and failure.

Transitional administrations and peacebuilding require sustained political attention and financial support. There are no short-cuts to building durable national institutions. Given the current disunity between nations, can an Interim Administration rely on strong and united political support?

In March 2025, addressing the UN Security Council SG Guterres warned of the growing gap between what peacekeeping missions are expected to achieve and the resources available to them. “We see a persistent mismatch between mandates and available resources,” he said, adding that the Council must recognise the limitations of peacekeeping in situations “where there is little or no peace to keep”.

¹⁴ <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/forming-new-operation> The process involves consultations, technical assessments, the Security Council authorizing the mission, appointing leadership, and extensive planning for logistical and support aspects before deployment can begin.

Annex 1: Prospects for a Transitional Authority in Gaza

Checklist Item	Status (Gaza-focused with West Bank/East Jerusalem note)
Clear Peace Agreement & UNSC Mandate (timeline & end-state defined)	Absent – No comprehensive ceasefire or political agreement has been ratified for Gaza’s transition, and no UN mandate yet defines a clear end-state; similarly, West Bank and East Jerusalem have no active peace framework or international mandate guiding their status. Does GITA need a resolution? Could it function without one?
Limits on Authority of Interim Administration (no-go areas defined)	Absent – No transitional authority exists in Gaza yet, so there are no agreed limits on its regulatory powers; likewise, in the West Bank/EJ there is no international administration – the Palestinian Authority (PA) has constrained autonomy under Israeli occupation, without any special legal carve-outs and the real issues will be the continuing presence of IDF in Gaza and the continuing increases in settler violence supported by the IDF in the West Bank.
Clear Transition Plan & Outcomes (minimal ambiguity, realistic timeline)	Partial/Emerging – Multiple proposals (e.g. Saudi French, Arab, Trump) outline phases for Gaza’s recovery, but no single agreed plan or timeline has been adopted, and significant ambiguities remain; in the West Bank/EJ, there is no transition roadmap at all, as the political process is stalled.
Financing Needs & Donor Commitments (funding windows identified)	Emerging – Gaza’s reconstruction needs are estimated at ~\$53 billion and initial funding mechanisms (e.g. a multi-donor trust fund) are being set up, but long-term donor commitments are not yet secured; the West Bank/EJ receive ongoing donor budget support, but funding is strained and would need scaling up for any major transition.
Citizen Participation & Agency (local input on governance)	Absent/Early-stage – Gazans have had no formal say in post-conflict governance plans so far, though transitional proposals mention eventual elections under the PA; similarly, West Bank/EJ Palestinians lack recent electoral voice (no national elections since 2006) and have little direct input into governance decisions.
Private Sector & IFI Role (economic reconstruction clarity)	Emerging – Discussions are underway to involve international financial institutions and private investors in Gaza’s reconstruction, but concrete frameworks are not yet in place as the enclave’s economy remains devastated and blockaded; in the West Bank/EJ, the private sector is relatively more active (with IFI support), yet growth is hampered by restrictions and uncertainty.
Institutional Transition Readiness (capacity of local authorities)	Low – Gaza’s institutions are debilitated: the PA has had little presence in Gaza for 17 years and Hamas-run structures are isolated and weakened by war, indicating very limited readiness for a handover; by contrast, PA institutions in the West Bank/EJ are established, but they face capacity and governance challenges that would complicate any expanded mandate.

Local Legitimacy & Authority (de jure vs de facto leadership)	Fragile – Gaza’s governance lacks legitimacy coherence: Hamas holds de facto power but is internationally rejected, while the PA (the de jure authority) has little local credibility after years of absence; in the West Bank/EJ, the PA’s legitimacy is eroding due to governance deficits and the constraints of Israeli control, contributing to public distrust.
Donor Alignment & Coordination (shared transition plan)	Partial – Key stakeholders are not yet unified: Arab states have coalesced around an Egypt-led reconstruction plan, while the U.S./Israel advance a different vision, so international coordination in Gaza remains tentative; in the West Bank/EJ, donors coordinate through frameworks like the AHLC, but political fragmentation and conditionalities persist.
Risk Management (spoilers, human rights, donor alignment)	Weak – Major risks in Gaza remain unmanaged: potential spoilers abound (Israel opposes certain plans, Hamas resists disarmament), humanitarian and human rights issues are acute, and there is no agreed mechanism to mitigate these threats; the West Bank/EJ similarly face high risks (e.g. settler violence, governance crackdowns) with no comprehensive risk mitigation strategy in place.
Dispute Resolution Mechanism (for transition stakeholders)	Absent – There is no formal mechanism to resolve disputes among parties in Gaza’s transition – disagreements are currently handled ad hoc, heightening the danger of deadlock or collapse; likewise, in the West Bank/EJ, there is no joint dispute forum – conflicts over issues are generally left to political talks or unilateral actions rather than a structured resolution process.
Women’s Engagement (UNSCR 1325) (inclusive transition)	Absent – Women have had minimal representation in Gaza’s emerging transition discussions (the process has been dominated by military and political leaders), falling short of UNSCR 1325 principles; the same is true in West Bank/EJ, where women remain largely excluded from high-level peace and security decision-making.
Joint Communication Strategy (common international–local messaging)	Absent – No unified communication plan exists – messaging on Gaza’s future is fragmented among various actors, which undermines public trust and clarity; similarly, in the West Bank/EJ, narratives are often divergent (between the PA, local communities, and international partners), impeding a common understanding of the path forward.
Stakeholder Buy-in (broad validation of transition)	Absent – Not all key stakeholders support the Gaza transition plan: Hamas has conditions, Israel is backing an alternative approach, and concerns of various groups have not been fully addressed; in the West Bank/EJ, divisions between factions and Israeli opposition to Palestinian sovereignty mean any transition concept also lacks unanimous buy-in. There has been little opportunity for citizens to define what sort of government they want in the first place, thus ensuring local participation and autonomy; The plan must ensure Palestinian agency in determining Gaza’s future.
Security Sector Governance (clarity via reconciled differences)	Absent – Gaza’s security governance is undefined post-war: Hamas remains armed and unreconciled with the PA, and no agreement exists on who will police or secure Gaza (an international force is proposed but not agreed); in

	the West Bank, the PA maintains security in limited areas but is undermined by Israeli operations and intra-Palestinian rifts, and East Jerusalem is entirely under Israeli security control.
Community-Based Security (bottom-up & top-down balance)	Absent – Gaza’s security is currently top-down (Israeli military, Hamas fighters, new militias), with local community security structures either destroyed or not empowered – a bottom-up approach has yet to take root; in the West Bank/EJ, community policing initiatives are minimal as centralized security (PA and Israeli forces) dominates, often generating local resentment rather than partnership.
Local Security Forces Involvement (engagement & ownership)	Absent – Planning for Gaza’s security transition has not meaningfully involved existing local security personnel: the approach is largely top-down (external training of new PA-led police) with limited local ownership or oversight so far; in the West Bank, while PA security forces exist, civilian oversight is weak, and many communities feel disconnected from security decision-making.
Manage Distrust in Transition (gradual, not rushed)	Critical – Deep mistrust pervades Gaza (between Hamas, PA, Israel and the populace), so any security transition must be very gradual – rushing it is widely recognized as untenable; similarly, in the West Bank/EJ, decades of conflict and political polarization mean confidence-building is essential and timelines for change remain cautious. Similarly, the donors agree on the transition plan; they must coordinate and respect each other’s roles and respective strengths. The principal partners must deliver on their shared responsibilities and accountabilities
Security Performance Benchmarks (monitoring & accountability)	Absent – Gaza has no agreed benchmarks or performance metrics for security forces – the focus is still on basic ceasefire maintenance rather than measured progress, and mechanisms for accountability are not in place; likewise, West Bank/EJ security arrangements lack transparent benchmarks, relying instead on ad hoc assessments (often driven by Israeli security concerns rather than public metrics).

Annex 2: Gaza International Transitional Authority (GITA)¹⁵

Preliminary assessment of structure document based on a close reading. The design is conceptually sound for an interim authority but profoundly flawed for the specific context of the State of Palestine. Structural absences:

1. Absence of an articulation of Palestinian sovereignty and self-determination. There is no obvious legal basis of “approving legislation”, and the existence of the GITA aside from an UNSC resolution.
2. Absence of a timetable for elections and for reunification under PA of the State of Palestine.
3. Absence of a truth and reconciliation, restorative and transitional justice mechanism for war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and the crime of starvation.
4. Absence of a legal basis for the restoration of property rights, ownership of construction process and outcomes, ownership and beneficiaries of the reconstruction of public services – schools, hospitals, infrastructure.
5. Absence of guardrails against foreign profiteering, capture and expropriation of reconstruction funding, investment and eventual operation of private sector in the Gaza economy

1) Sovereignty and Self-Determination:

The plan frames GITA’s mandate as deriving from a UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution (p.2) and empowers the International Board to “*approve legislation*” (p.3), yet it does not articulate a Palestinian constitutional basis or popular consent for that law-making power. In practice, this resembles an externally mandated trusteeship without a clear expression of Palestinian sovereignty or self-determination, creating risk of legitimacy challenges and non-compliance across institutions and the public.

What is proposed:

- UNSC as the legal basis (p.2); International Board “approves legislation” and *issues binding decisions* (p.3).
- Legislative and legal supervision drafts instruments and submits them for Board ratification (pp.8–9), but no domestic Palestinian instrument/electorate is cited as the source of constitutional authority.
- PA Coordination Supervision is advisory and facilitative (p.11), not a binding pathway to sovereign reintegration.

Gaps and implications.

- Constitutional vacuum. Without an explicit Palestinian legal compact (e.g., a transitional Basic Law endorsed by representative Palestinian bodies), the Board’s

¹⁵ The full document can be accessed here: <https://britainpalestineproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/GITA.pdf>

legislative power risks being seen as extra-territorial, undermining courts, civil police, and municipal administration that must enforce those rules (pp.13–16).

- Security authority ambiguity. The Security Oversight Commissioner “establishes and enforces rules of engagement” while the JSCC is *not* a command structure (pp.9–10). The plan describes coordination with Israel and Egypt (p.18) but does not state how GITA’s sovereign authority relates to any residual or parallel IDF roles, leaving decision rights contested in crises (pp.9–10, 17–18).
- Representation deficit. Board composition contemplates “at least one” Palestinian member on a 7–10 seat body (p.3), and municipal/PEA leaders are appointed, not elected (pp.13–15), amplifying the perception that sovereignty is exercised *about* Palestinians rather than *by* them.

2) Elections & Reunification

Absent a dated, conditions-based roadmap to local elections and reunification under the PA, the transitional regime can ossify. This threatens domestic legitimacy, donor patience, and the credibility of any “handover” narrative.

What is proposed

- Municipal mayors and PEA directors are appointed by the Board during transition (pp.13–15). A “framework for future local elections will be developed”, but no timeline is provided (p.14).
- PA Coordination Supervision aims to promote coherence and prepare “roadmaps for future reintegration,” again without timelines or binding triggers (p.11).

Gaps and implications

- No dated milestones (voter registry readiness, election law adoption, observation arrangements). While the Executive Secretariat is tasked with digital registries and IDs (pp.5–6) that could enable elections, the plan does not tie these enablers to election dates.
- Legitimacy gap persists while governance remains appointment-driven; early “governance-from-outside” staging in El Arish/Amman/Cairo (pp.2–3) magnifies this optics problem unless anchored to a visible electoral clock.

3) Transitional Justice

The plan lacks a truth and reconciliation mechanism and a defined pathway for addressing war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, and the crime of starvation. Without a restorative and prosecutorial architecture, grievances fester, victims lack remedy, and institutions lack legitimacy.

What is proposed:

- The Legislative and legal supervision pillar *advises on transitional justice processes* (p.9) but does not establish or resource a truth commission, special chamber, victim registry, reparations scheme, or a missing-persons/forensics program.

- The Judicial Board covers courts and prosecutions (pp.15–16), yet no Corrections/Prisons Service or independent custodial inspectorate is defined—leaving the detention-to-disposition chain incomplete and vulnerable to abuse claims (pp.15–16).
- DDR/SSR is referenced only as coordination with the PA (p.9), with no program design (eligibility, vetting, amnesties, reintegration), and no explicit role for GITA in disarming Hamas or other armed groups—an omission given the ISF’s counter-terror and perimeter functions (p.17).

Gaps and implications.

- Accountability vacuum jeopardises reconciliation and invites parallel, external or politicized accountability tracks.
- Operational/legal risk: policing (p.15), prosecution (pp.15–16), and ISF operations (p.17) proceed without a defined custodial/legal redress system, increasing exposure to IHL/HR violations and public mistrust.

4) Legal Basis for Operations, Property, and Public Assets

The plan does not codify *who owns what*—from restored private property to newly built public assets (schools, hospitals, utilities – often formally owned and operated by UNWRA)—nor the beneficiaries of reconstruction outcomes. Absent a robust legal framework, the program is exposed to disputes over title, restitution, usufruct, and *right of return*, and to allegations of de facto expropriation.

What is proposed:

- Property Rights Preservation Unit (PRPU) documents *voluntary departures* and issues “protected departure certificates,” asserting non-prejudice to return/ownership (p.16), but no Property Restitution Law, Claims Tribunal, or Land Registry modernisation is set out.
- Reconstruction Supervision sets standards and reviews pipelines, including land-use policy and urban planning (p.8), while GIPEDA structures PPPs/SEZs and “regulates foreign and domestic investment flows” (pp.11–12). The junction between standards/approvals (p.8) and asset ownership and concessions (pp.11–12) is not legally specified.
- ISF controls border/perimeter security (p.17). If buffer/perimeter changes arise from security policy, the plan does not state how return and restitution would be guaranteed for affected parcels, creating rights risks. Moreover, delimitation of Gaza border impossible with a defined buffer zone still under IDF control.

Gaps and implications.

- No codified restitution and compensation regime (eligibility, evidence, adjudication, appeals).
- Public-asset ownership and service concessions (e.g., utilities) are undefined—who holds title, who operates, and how tariffs, subsidies, and social obligations are enforced.

- Movement and displacement optics: PRPU safeguards (p.16) may be read as legitimising displacement unless paired with judicial oversight, free legal aid, and a non-derogable right of return in law.

5) Guardrails Against Foreign Profiteering and Expropriation (private sector)

The economic architecture privileges GIPEDA—a commercially driven authority that *bypasses the Executive Secretariat* (p.12), designs PPPs/SEZs, provides investor facilitation/protection, and even offers guarantees - unclear from which budget pool(pp.11–12). Meanwhile, GFAF governs grants (p.12), but there is no parallel regime for equity, PPP revenue-sharing, beneficial ownership transparency, conflict-of-interest, or local content. This creates high capture and profiteering risk, especially given the under-resourced public-service envelope in the budget.

What is proposed

- Capital reconstruction costs are excluded from the core budget and assumed to be donor/finance-driven (p.19), with Year-3 opex at \$164m (p.20)—≈\$75 per capita for governance, policing, justice, municipalities, and PEA core services—suggesting structural reliance on private and grant finance for delivery and rebuild.
- Benchmarks cited for costing include UNMIK/UNTAET, small-state budgets, and Gaza/West Bank models (p.19), but the plan does not reconcile these with Gaza’s current massive level of destruction, service-delivery collapse (pp.13–14) or with the Civil Police’s broad mandate relative to its funding (pp.15, 20).
- GHF is named among humanitarian partners (p.7) without a defined legal status, governance, or integration with GFAF—fragmenting fiduciary controls – UNWRA is not mentioned in the plan.

Gaps and implications.

- No anti-capture safeguards: absent PPP law, independent procurement, prohibited-party lists, COOL/beneficial-ownership disclosures, and conflict-of-interest rules for Board/Commissioners, GIPEDA can become a vector for foreign profiteering.
- Economic governance overlaps: Reconstruction Supervision (standards/approvals) vs GIPEDA (deal-making) report separately to the Board (pp.8, 11–12), risking dual power centers and project selection bias.
- Borders, customs, and revenue custody: PEA handles trade/customs (p.14) while ISF manages crossings/perimeter (p.17); without explicit custody/audit protocols, leakages and rent-seeking are likely.

Positive features

The plan is structurally coherent on paper, separating oversight (five commissioners) from execution (Palestinian Executive Authority (PEA)), anchored in a UNSC mandate, and buttressed by fiduciary controls (GFAF) and an investment arm (GIPEDA). The security architecture distinguishes *stabilisation* (ISF), *policing* (Civil Police), and *coordination* (JSCC).

These design choices are clear in the “Summary of Structural Logic” (p.2), the GITA Board and Chairman sections (pp.3–5), the oversight pillars (pp.7–11), and the org chart (p.21).

Key strengths

1. Clean separation of roles. Oversight commissioners are regulatory/coordination bodies, not implementers (pp.7–11). This in theory helps with accountability.
2. Administrative backbone. The Executive Secretariat with FMU and PEABU provides a centre of gravity for budgeting and performance management (pp.5–6).
3. Fiduciary controls. The GFAF as an independent grant facility managed by a third-party fiduciary with regular reporting should bolster donor confidence (pp.12–13).
4. Security deconfliction mechanism. The JSCC as a coordination (not command) platform across ISF, Civil Police, and EPU is sensible for day-to-day planning and humanitarian deconfliction (pp.9–10).
5. Transitional legality. A Legislative & Legal Supervision pillar to codify the transitional framework and protect rights (incl. property) is a necessary spine (pp.8–9, 16).

Acronyms			
DDR	Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration	GITA	Gaza International Transitional Authority
EPU	Executive Protection Unit	ISF	International Stabilisation Force or International Security Force
ESG	Executive Secretariat of GITA	JSCC	Joint Security Coordination Centre
FMU	Financial Management Unit	PEA	Palestinian Executive Authority
GFAF	GITA Grants and Finance Accountability Facility	PEABU	Palestinian Executive Authority Budget Unit
GHF	<i>Gaza Humanitarian Foundation</i>	PFM	Public financial management
GIPEDA	Gaza Investment Promotion and Economic Development Authority	SEZ / SEZs	Special Economic Zone(s)
SSR	Security sector reform		