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YEARS

Interim Security Governance Mechanisms for the occupied Palestinian territory

BEFORE AND AFTER A CEASEFIRE

2025



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Note

All figures cited in this report are accurate as of the date of their respective sources, with the most recent being from April 2025. These figures are dynamic and may be subject to change over time.

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Executive summary

This paper by DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance offers an analytical and technical contribution to the debate on future security arrangements in Gaza. Drawing on field research, comparative post-conflict experience, and international best practices, it provides a pragmatic framework to inform discussions on security and institutional stability in a politically fragmented and volatile context.

Existing scenarios: Strengths and shortcomings

The paper reviews four widely discussed scenarios for post-war Gaza governance against five key criteria: Public legitimacy, spoiler potential, security capacity, responsiveness to security needs, and whether they offer a path to long-term stability.

Scenario I: Unilateral return of the Palestinian Authority (PA): This scenario envisions deploying PA security forces and restoring PA administrative control. Proposals such as the OSC “Post-Conflict Gaza Security Concept” suggest deploying 3,000 PA police personnel to Gaza in seven phases. While useful for preparing PA personnel, a return without consent from other Palestinian factions or a revived democratic process will likely lack legitimacy and face resistance. Given Gaza’s current situation, PA capacity would also need to be augmented further.

Scenario II: Prolonged Israeli military occupation: Reflecting the Israeli government’s stated intentions, this scenario entails medium- to long-term control over Gaza through military presence, fortified corridors, and aid distribution outside UN channels. A military occupation of the Gaza Strip violates international law, disregards the security needs of Palestinians, and will further entrench conflict dynamics.

Scenario III: Joint Palestinian governance via a technocratic committee: Based on the Arab League plan, this scenario proposes a small interim committee of technocrats operating under the PA’s umbrella for six months. While this could serve as a useful temporary governance element, the short transition period leaves no space for revitalising Palestinian democracy or building national consensus.

Scenario IV: Deployment of international or regional troops: Advocated by actors such as the UAE, this scenario involves an international coalition to stabilise Gaza. While it could enable rapid reconstruction and address PA capacity shortages, it requires broad Palestinian consent, must avoid perceptions of external imposition, and cannot replace Palestinian-led governance.

DCAF's Interim Security Governance Mechanisms

While building on valuable elements of existing proposals, this paper introduces the concept of Interim Security Governance Mechanisms (ISGMs): temporary, adaptable arrangements to prevent governance failure, restore basic stability, and create conditions for reconstruction and political transition. The developed ISGMs are guided by six principles:

1. Integration of security governance into early recovery
2. Distinguishing between security agencies with military and civilian mandates of the de-facto authority
3. Build on existing civilian-oriented local governance and security structures
4. Situate humanitarian aid within the humanitarian–development–peace nexus
5. Link reconstruction to PA reform and national consensus-building
6. Embed Gaza's recovery within the broader aim of Palestinian statehood and territorial unity

Phase I – Before a ceasefire: Preventing governance collapse and alleviating humanitarian crisis

Goal: Prevent a total governance vacuum, mitigate the humanitarian crisis and prepare for later phases.

Proposed measures:

- Immediately support existing and functioning local structures (civil police, civil defence, municipalities, emergency committees) that have maintained some public order.
- Ensure UN-led humanitarian aid delivery (particularly through UNRWA).
- Strengthen community-based protection strategies & establish safe humanitarian zones.
- Provide urgently needed equipment to civil defence to allow them to implement their mandate in safeguarding civilians.

While essential, these measures cannot substitute for a ceasefire or long-term stabilisation.

Phase II – Approx. first year after a ceasefire: Immediate stabilisation

Goal: Establish legitimate Palestinian governance mechanism to stabilise security and humanitarian conditions, and allow time for reforms and national consensus-building before a return of the PA.

Proposed measures:

- Create a time- and mandate-bound Technical Gaza Committee (TGC) of 11–15 independent technocrats (majority from Gaza), under PA authority, to oversee Gaza's civil administration and manage security forces.
- Deploy a UN-supported or led time- and mandate-bound Gaza International Mission (GIM) based on PA consent but ideally following a broader cross-

factional agreement. The GIM should manage specialised security functions: border control, de-escalation with Israel, demining, and security force training.

- Integrate absentee PA personnel, community volunteers and new recruits into existing local police and civil defence forces.
- Establish a neutral reconstruction mechanism not under Israeli or Palestinian control.

Phase III – Approx. years two to four: Transition to unified Palestinian governance

Goal: Transfer authority from TGC to a reformed, democratically legitimised PA, unifying Gaza and the West Bank while focusing on reconstruction and reform efforts.

Proposed measures:

Hold elections in year 2, enabling a newly elected PA government to assume authority in Gaza and dissolve the TGC, marking the unification of governance structures across the West Bank and Gaza.

- Withdraw the GIM from Gaza by the end of year 4, transferring all remaining responsibilities to the PA.
- Implement comprehensive reconstruction as an opportunity to build back better.
- Integrate Gaza's security and justice institutions into a unified framework and reconstitute them as non-political community-oriented forces.
- Reactivate justice services through a combination of existing courts, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, and digital platforms, introducing alternative sentencing options.
- Revitalise livelihoods by supporting local businesses, creating jobs, and restoring agriculture to enable families to regain self-sufficiency, with particular attention to women and youth.
- Establish transitional justice and reparation mechanisms to restore dignity of all victims.

While the proposed timeline of the three phases provides a useful reference, it must remain flexible and responsive to evolving political and security dynamics.

Way forward

DCAF's ISGM bridge urgent humanitarian-security needs with the long-term goal of a unified, legitimate, and democratic Palestinian polity. The mechanisms further address legitimacy deficits by advocating for timely but not hastened elections, reducing spoiler risks through inclusive arrangements and domestic reforms, building capacity by combining local and international expertise, and maintaining a clear pathway towards sustainable peace and statehood. These efforts should commence without delay, even prior to a formal ceasefire, in complementarity to the collective efforts of other international actors and their strategic thinking on the way forward for Gaza and the oPt as a whole.

Introduction

Since the outbreak of the Gaza war in October 2023, the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), including Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, has faced a sharp deterioration in terms of security, political, economic, and social conditions.

The West Bank has seen severe escalation, marked by intensified Israeli settlement expansion, near-daily military raids, mass arrests, and large-scale forced displacement. Meanwhile, the Palestinian Authority (PA) faces deep political and financial crises, compounded by internal Palestinian political divisions and declining public trust. Israel's withholding of Palestinian revenues has further eroded the PA's capacity to provide services. Together, these dynamics are arguably pushing the West Bank to a critical crossroads, where violence, insecurity, political fragmentation, and loss of governance capacity threaten the prospects of peace and seriously undermine the viability of a two-state solution.

The situation in the Gaza Strip, with its 2.4 million inhabitants, is one of extreme crisis.¹ More than 60,000 Palestinians have been killed; an estimated 66 per cent of all buildings have been destroyed; and more than 80 per cent of basic infrastructure has sustained significant damage.² Humanitarian conditions are catastrophic, with reported hunger and malnutrition, severe water shortages, and a persistent health crisis. Around 95 per cent of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip are reported to be internally displaced amid the destruction of homes, hospitals and clinics, roads and other infrastructure. Coupled with limited access to food, basic survival remains a daily challenge. Beyond the immediate humanitarian crisis, the war has also left a profound political and security vacuum, with no clear roadmap for governance, security, and reconstruction.

To chart a path forward, the PA and various regional as well as international actors have outlined plans for the future governance of Gaza. Such plans include proposals for the security and justice sectors, mostly focusing on long-term governance arrangements and institutional reforms. While discussions about Gaza's long-term governance are essential, it remains imperative to implement tangible transitional measures that can immediately improve the lives of Palestinians in Gaza, restore basic stability, and contribute to regional security. The development and implementation of Interim Security Governance Mechanisms (ISGMs) would likely address pressing needs – while laying the foundations for longer-term stabilisation, and the eventual reunification of the oPt under accountable, inclusive Palestinian institutions rooted in good governance principles. To explore the introduction of ISGMs in this context, DCAF has conducted consultations and research since October 2023, with funding from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs since April 2024, under the project “Adapting to the Paradigm Shift: Sketching Enhanced Security Provision and Governance for Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory”.

1 UNRWA, 2025a.

2 UNITAR, 2025.

Defining Interim Security Governance Mechanisms

In the face of the current situation in the oPt, it is essential to develop approaches for delivering security for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, such as the interim security governance mechanisms (ISGMs) suggested in this paper. DCAF understands these mechanisms as temporary arrangements designed to bridge the gap between a situation characterized by violent crisis and institutional collapse, toward peaceful, inclusive, and democratic governance. In the context of war and immediate post-war recovery, ISGMs should help alleviate the most severe security governance issues and sustain basic safety.

In the longer term, ISGMs lay the foundation for a structured political transition, reconstruction, and development process. As such, ISGMs are part of a broader transitional integration process that seeks to balance immediate security needs with the requirements of longer-term development. When applied successfully, these arrangements can create and sustain a ‘holding pattern’ that improves people’s lives. Designed carefully, ISGMs can reduce the security vacuum both during war and in the early stages of a ceasefire – before a formal peace agreement is reached.

To better understand the concept of ISGMs, it can be broken down into core components:

Interim

A time-bound, transitional period during which ad hoc or temporary governance and security structures are established to stabilize a context of violent crisis or institutional collapse.



Security

People-centred and governance-based concept that goes beyond traditional state-centric approaches. Security is not merely the absence of conflict or external threats, but the protection of individuals and communities through institutions that are accountable, transparent, and rooted in democratic governance and the rule of law. Human security is defined by the absence of insecurity and threats, to be free from fear (of physical, sexual or psychological abuse, violence, persecution or death) and from want (for example through gainful employment, food and health).



Governance

Formal and informal processes, actors and values that shape the provision of any kind of public good. A people-centred approach to governance places the rights and needs of individuals and communities at the heart of decision-making. Guided by principles of inclusivity, transparency, participation, and accountability.



Mechanisms

Temporary but structured arrangements such as institutions, frameworks, operational procedures, and coordination platforms put in place to deliver security and governance functions during a period of crisis.



Graph number 1: The components of the ISGMs

Methodology

The ISGMs that DCAF has developed in this paper focus on the Gaza Strip. They are grounded in a thorough and systematic analysis of empirical evidence. The end result draws on a triangulation of three primary sources of data:

1. Two rounds of surveys (n ~ 400) conducted in Gaza, carried out in two distinct periods: the first in June 2024, 10 months into the war; and the second in March 2025, following the signing and subsequent collapse of the ceasefire.
2. Qualitative interviews with 68 Palestinian citizens of Gaza carefully selected to represent diverse socio-political segments of Gaza's society, as well as security providers and representatives of public institutions in the West Bank and Gaza, conducted in June and September 2024.
3. Consultations with the international representation in the oPt, as well as foreign ministry personnel, political figures and academics in the capitals of Egypt, Jordan, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates in November 2024 and April 2025.

The resulting quantitative and qualitative data were systematically analysed.³ Quantitative data from surveys were analysed using statistical methods, and qualitative data were analysed using a qualitative content analysis. Findings were contextualized through an extensive review of academic literature, including comparative evidence from similar cases. The analysis highlights what worked well where and why, while remaining sensitive to the unique conditions in the Gaza Strip.

3 Given the challenges of conducting research under wartime conditions, our data allowed only for limited conclusions. To address this limitation, we validated our findings against data from other sources, such as the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PCPSR).

Scope

The present paper is a technical and analytical contribution developed by DCAF. DCAF is dedicated to making states and people safer through more effective and accountable security and justice. With over two decades of experience in the oPt, DCAF draws on its longstanding local engagement and institutional support, grounded in international norms and good practices.

The paper does not aim to articulate a political vision for the future of the Palestinian people. Instead, it offers a technical proposal to inform pathways to strengthen good security governance within the politically fragmented and complex environment of the oPt. While the paper focuses on the Gaza Strip, the measures proposed would likely contribute to stability across the entire oPt.

The intention of the paper is to provide a practical framework that can help shape discussions and policy considerations. While the intersection of security and politics is inevitable, the paper remains firmly within an analytical and technical scope, focused on the urgent need to engage with the various scenarios proposed for the future of the entire oPt. As such, the paper is not intended as a political roadmap, but rather as a contribution towards solutions rooted in comparative experience, field data, and international norms, respecting the local context and upholding national ownership.



Structure of the report

The present paper is structured in four sections. The first section examines security challenges in Gaza, based on DCAF data gathered directly from Palestinian stakeholders. It identifies the specific issues that ISGMs must address to meet the security needs of Palestinians. The second section reviews the main existing plans and scenarios for post-war Gaza based on defined qualitative criteria. The third section elaborates DCAF's proposal and as such forms DCAF's substantive contribution based on research and the organization's long-standing expertise in the sector. It presents a set of ISGMs tailored to the current context of Gaza, complementing existing plans. The fourth and final section applies the evaluation criteria used to review existing plans to assess DCAF's proposal. The assessment demonstrates the proposal's potential to offer a viable, legitimate, and effective path forward.

1 Security challenges for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip

While it may seem obvious that war creates fundamental security issues, it remains far from trivial to understand the precise nature and distribution of these.⁴ To identify and understand the challenges, it is necessary to infer what type of security is needed, at which points in time, and with what urgency, and – by extension – the nature and mandate of the security actors that should be mobilised and when.⁵ Moreover, the scale of the security presence required, particularly in terms of numbers, should be informed by the distribution of insecurity. This means that drawing broad-stroke conclusions about security arrangements is generally problematic, as security needs and the mechanisms addressing them must be contextualised, taking into consideration the many variables that may affect them. Ultimately, this underscores the importance of designing ISGMs that are context-specific, people-centred, and responsive to security needs and governance deficits.

Key findings

Absence of personal safety and social stability

Insecurity stemming from military operations, especially bombing and shelling, is experienced as the most critical challenge for Palestinians in Gaza. By March 2025, more than 50,000 Palestinians had been killed.⁶ According to DCAF's survey, around 50 per cent of the population had lost at least one family member by May 2024, while 93 per cent had lost at least one extended relative, friend, or neighbour. By March 2025, the percentage reporting the loss of a family member had risen to 60 per cent.⁷

The widespread death caused by Israeli military operations has created pervasive feelings of fear and anxiety about personal survival and the survival of immediate family members. The complete absence of physical safety thus carries intense psychological stress, which Palestinians in Gaza experience daily. According to a study commissioned by the organisation "War Child", 96 per cent of children living through the war in Gaza feel that their death is imminent, and almost half of children surveyed expressed the wish to die due to the trauma they have endured.⁸ These figures illustrate both the widespread direct experience of loss and the ever-present fear of death.

Forced displacement

The second major insecurity Palestinians face is displacement. In our June 2024 survey, 83 per cent of respondents reported having been displaced. By March 2025, this figure had risen to 95 per cent, corresponding to roughly two million people. Such figures align with UN estimates.⁹ Displacement, therefore, affects almost the entire population. Many individuals have been displaced multiple times, with some forced

4 Firchow, Funk, and Mac Ginty, 2025.

5 The analysis of the pressing security challenges currently faced by Palestinians in the Gaza Strip is based on the two surveys and qualitative interviews we conducted.

6 OCHA, 2025.

7 See also PCPSR - Palestinian Centre for Policy and Survey Research, 2024a.

8 Bashir and Shorfa, 2024.

9 UNRWA, 2025b.

to relocate up to ten times. DCAF's survey found that about 40 per cent of people who attempted to return to their homes during the ceasefire period found their homes uninhabitable and – following the collapse of the ceasefire – were forced to flee again.

Repeated displacement has compounded the sense of insecurity and created a deep sense of personal as well as social instability. Families have been separated, personal and communal relations ruptured, and many have found themselves relocated multiple times into overcrowded environments with no personal space and lacking or inadequate infrastructure. Displacement is thus not only a logistical and humanitarian threat but also a profound driver of psychological stress and social fragmentation.

Food and water insecurity

The third major security issue experienced by Palestinians in Gaza is food and water insecurity. According to the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PCPSR) data from September 2024, 40 per cent of respondents said they did not have enough food for even one to two days.¹⁰ A report from the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) for October 2024 classified about 1.84 million people across the Gaza Strip as experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity, including nearly 133,000 people facing catastrophic food insecurity.¹¹

Access to food and water closely correlates with Israeli policies on allowing, limiting or blocking the entry of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip. Since 2 March 2025, when Israel announced a full blockade of humanitarian aid, the situation has worsened dramatically.¹² Analysing our March 2025 data, food and potable water access emerged as one of the main daily concerns for Palestinians in Gaza, compounded by the security risks involved in attempting to secure these essentials. At the end of April 2025, UNRWA stated that critical food supplies were running “dangerously low” for more than 2 million people previously supplied by UNRWA and its partners. Similarly, on 25 April 2025, the World Food Programme (WFP) announced that its food stocks in Gaza were completely depleted, leaving more than 400,000 people who relied on WFP aid without alternative sources.¹³

Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) considerations

While the effects of war, displacement, and deprivation affect all segments of society, intersecting factors of gender, age, and socio-economic status shape the qualitative experience, form and intensity of insecurity.

Women and children, who make up the majority of Gaza's civilian population, face particularly severe risks and account for approximately 70 per cent of all fatalities.¹⁴ Many children have been left orphaned as both parents have been killed, and/or forced to assume adult responsibilities while lacking the cognitive and emotional tools to cope. Both children and the elderly face greater difficulty accessing humanitarian aid due to the physical demands of long queues and the dangers of chaotic distribution. These risks have only intensified after the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation took over distribution. Women are also exposed to increased domestic and sexual violence. In

10 PCPSR - Palestinian Centre for Policy and Survey Research, 2024b.

11 IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, 2024.

12 United Nations, 2025.

13 UNRWA, 2025c; WFP, 2025.

14 UN Human Rights Office, 2024

addition, malnutrition and psychological stress pose grave health risks for pregnant women and lactating mothers. Socio-economic status is another critical factor. For example, some families have been able to pay at least US\$5,000 per person to cross into Egypt or had the means to purchase whatever food has been available in the market more consistently.¹⁵

Testimonies describe the intersection of many of these characteristics. For example, elderly, less mobile women - often widowed - remain isolated in damaged homes and are unable to access aid or flee to areas considered safer without support networks. Such layered vulnerabilities must be central to any effort to understand and address the needs of Gaza's population.

Summary

Our data shows an overall trend that feelings of insecurity have increased over time. When comparing information from June 2024 to March 2025, Palestinians in Gaza have tended to perceive the situation as rapidly deteriorating. As one Gaza resident put it:

“We feel threatened with death at every moment. We move from place to place searching for security, but we do not find security and safety anywhere we can flee to. We feel afraid at every moment. We cannot escape it.”

The impact of war, displacement, and the daily struggle for survival has created a situation that Palestinians describe not only as personal insecurity but as societal collapse, chaos, and unpredictability. This sense of collapse is massively linked to military operations, policies on aid, and the daily quest for basic needs. However, the existential nature of the situation should not only be understood at the personal and physical level, but also at the social, political and national levels. Palestinians experience the situation as a form of societal disintegration, a profound absence of collective agency and power, and the fragmentation of the symbols and structures of Palestinian society and statehood. Hence, when asked about the meaning of security Palestinians overwhelmingly responded by pointing toward two aspects: 1) stability, denoting tranquillity and an unchanging environment, and 2) absence of fear.

What must Interim Security Governance Mechanisms entail?

ISGMs must be tailored to address the specific security challenges arising as a consequence of the Gaza war and the potential dynamics of its aftermath that extend to the oPt as a whole.

The key demand voiced by Palestinians is for international and regional actors to support an end to the war and the establishment of a permanent ceasefire - an outcome that ISGMs alone cannot deliver. Beyond this, Palestinians surveyed by DCAF consistently identified three priority areas of intervention as equal priorities: 1) access to humanitarian aid; 2) the reconstruction of public infrastructure and housing; and 3) the resumption of the work of security forces.

These priorities reflect a deeper, urgent need to restore predictability, social order, and the collective agency of Palestinian society. At stake is not only physical safety but also the protection of social cohesion and national identity. ISGMs must therefore be designed not only to produce tangible improvements in personal security but

15 Veronese et al., 2025

also to provide a more stable, predictable, and enabling environment for daily life of Palestinians as well as their national aspirations.¹⁶ The latter includes paving the way for a unified Palestinian state that unites all parts of the oPt.

Hence, ISGMs must be seen not only as operational tools for stabilisation, but also as part of a broader political and societal strategy that aims to rebuild a Palestinian collective sense of security, stability, and dignity. This can only be achieved if ISGMs are situated within the complex political landscape shaped by the positions of the conflict parties, as well as the internal Palestinian divide between Fatah and the Palestinian Authority (PA), on the one hand, and Hamas, on the other.

In other words, ISGMs must account for both political and security sector governance. Navigating the tension between urgent short-term needs and longer-term political transition requires a temporal approach. ISGMs should therefore provide a clear timeline that addresses immediate security concerns while supporting medium-term stabilisation.¹⁷ In the table below, DCAF presents this dual political and security governance focus, organised along a temporal axis of three phases, outlining what ISGMs must deliver at each stage.

Phase I: Before a ceasefire

Political governance	Security sector governance
Preventing complete governance failure: ISGMs must provide for a semblance of governance, and some measure of social order to prevent a complete governance failure and security vacuum.	Alleviating the humanitarian crisis: ISGMs must alleviate the humanitarian crisis. While this ultimately depends on Israeli agreement to humanitarian access and coordination, ISGMs should provide access to food, water, shelter, and health and sanitation services, at least at a rudimentary level. Security arrangements must help enable safe spaces as well as the safe, orderly, and predictable access to and distribution of aid.

Phase II: After a ceasefire

Political governance	Security sector governance
Establishing an interim governance: ISGMs must identify the political authority overseeing Gaza in the short term to prevent political fragmentation. This includes clarifying oversight over security actors, including informal actors.	Security sector stabilisation: Security sector stabilisation involves strengthening what remains of local structures, including informal security providers, such as influential families or community police, that can fill gaps in the absence of formal institutions. Their inclusion must be carefully managed to not undermine state institutions in the long-term.

¹⁶ Schnabel and Ehrhart, 2005.

¹⁷ Duffy Toft, 2009.

Phase III: Medium-term reconstruction

Political governance	Security sector governance
Political transition towards a unified, stable, legitimate government based on principles of democracy and self-determination: ISGMs should create the conditions for a unified, legitimate and representative Palestinian government across the entire oPt, based on democratic participation, free choice and inclusivity, while enabling regional peace and stability.	Provisions for a long-term security sector across the oPt under democratic oversight operating on principles of good governance: Interim security governance should serve as a stepping stone toward a unified Palestinian security sector across the oPt as a whole that operates under democratic oversight and in accordance with principles of good governance.

Table number 1: Phases and goals of ISGMs

2 Scenarios of post-war governance in Gaza: A review

Currently, four hypothetical scenarios are widely discussed as potential outcomes for the governance of Gaza following the war. These scenarios represent different attempts to address the pressing political, security, and humanitarian challenges that have emerged from the war. This section analyses each scenario to assess the feasibility of the various options currently proposed by key players in the context, based on predefined criteria, while also identifying their limitations.

To assess the scenarios, DCAF has developed five criteria based on the literature on Security Sector Reform (SSR),¹⁸ post-war peacebuilding¹⁹ and reconstruction.²⁰

- **Legitimacy:** Is the proposed governing actor perceived as legitimate by the Palestinian public?
- **Spoilers:** Do key actors have an incentive or motive to undermine the arrangement and are therefore likely to undermine it?
- **Capacity:** Does the proposed actor or coalition have the ability to effectively govern Gaza and maintain security?
- **Path to long-term stability:** Does the proposed arrangement lay the groundwork for transitioning into sustainable stabilization?
- **Responsive to security needs:** Does the arrangement address the security needs of the population?

The analysis draws on comparative evidence from other post-conflict contexts, survey data from Gaza, and interviews with Palestinian officials and security providers. It is further informed by regional consultations conducted by DCAF in Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar, as well as regular exchanges with members of the international community. This analysis rests on the underlying assumption that security, justice and a political vision for Palestinians are essential for long-term stability and peace and will thus enhance security for Israelis as well.

Scenario I: The unilateral return of the Palestinian Authority to Gaza

The scenario favoured by many Western governments envisions a unilateral return of the Palestinian Authority to govern the Gaza Strip, without necessarily securing the consent of other Palestinian factions or democratic input from the Palestinian population. This approach typically includes the deployment of PA security forces, the re-establishment of Fatah-led administrative control, and an externally supported reconstruction process. While closely aligned with the PA's agenda, this scenario places significant responsibility on a body that already faces challenges governing the West Bank.

This approach is also in line with the plan designed in April 2025 by the Office for the Security Coordinator (OSC), formerly the United States Security Coordinator (USSC). The OSC plan places a strong emphasis on gradually deploying initially 3,000 Palestinian Auxiliary Police to secure Gaza in seven phases, supported by private security companies (PSCs) and international technical experts. Over a

18 Mutangadura-Yeswa, 2024; Mustafa, 2015; Ansorg and Gordon, 2020.

19 Paris, 2004; Mac Ginty, 2021; Newman, Paris, and Richmond, 2010.

20 Elkahoul, ed., 2024; Eriksson and Khaleel, eds., 2019.

period estimated by DCAF to be two to three years, the force is to be expanded to 5,000 police officers and 5,000 members of the National Security Forces. While this scenario may seem attractive to international actors seeking a quick approach to recovery in Gaza, it has severe limitations regarding inclusivity, legitimacy, and sustainability.

A return of the PA without a comprehensive national reconciliation process, or at least broader Palestinian consensus, is likely to provoke resistance from other Palestinian factions and citizens. If any faction is excluded not only from Gaza but from Palestinian politics altogether, it would likely act as a spoiler, potentially reverting to insurgent-style tactics against PA security forces and administrative personnel. This would lead to further political grievances and internal violence.

Furthermore, Palestinian public opinion complicates a unilateral reinstatement of the PA in Gaza, particularly given the absence of a clear public mandate. President Abbas garners only 10 per cent support among Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, compared to 26 per cent for the Hamas leadership, although it is important to note that Hamas's popularity has significantly declined in recent months.²¹ According to DCAF data, 48 per cent of people in Gaza support a return of PA institutions conditioned, however, on a systematic reform process. This stems from a broader legitimacy deficit that the PA faces in both Gaza and the West Bank, exacerbated by years of political stagnation, governance failures, and an inability to respond effectively to the needs of the Palestinian population.²²

Moreover, in terms of capacity, the PA is not equipped to take over Gaza's security and governance responsibilities overnight. While the PA's "Gaza Relief and Early Recovery Plan" of January 2025 outlines some measures for recovery, it arguably appears insufficient in addressing the security governance challenges in Gaza, as well as in detailing the specifics of the governance model to be implemented. Additionally, efforts by the OSC to train Palestinian police officers have yet to materialize. Even if training proceeds, the PA will still face monumental challenges in rebuilding Gaza's institutions, restoring public services, and, crucially, securing public trust.

Elections, as proposed by the March 2024 Arab Summit Communiqué, could eventually unify Gaza and the West Bank and legitimise a PA presence, though they may not result in a Fatah-led government.²³ Organising elections amid Gaza's current devastation would in any event present major challenges, and evidence suggests that holding them prematurely is likely to exacerbate instability.²⁴

The reliance on PSCs to augment newly trained Palestinian forces also raises important concerns. Such companies commonly engage foreign nationals, who may lack cultural and linguistic familiarity with Gaza, further complicating their integration into the local context and, as case studies show, carries a risk in terms of human rights violations.²⁵ Therefore, deploying PSCs must be done cautiously and in accordance with international standards as consistently outlined by DCAF.²⁶

21 PCPSR - Palestinian Centre for Policy and Survey Research, 2024b.

22 Mustafa, 2015.

23 The Arab Republic of Egypt - Presidency, 2025.

24 Brancati and Snyder, 2013; Höglund, Jarstad, and Kovacs, 2009; Flores and Nooruddin, 2012.

25 Carmola, 2010; Andreopoulos and Kleinig, 2019.

26 DCAF - Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, 2021.

Finally, the Israeli government has made it explicitly clear that it opposes a return of the PA to Gaza, citing its broader opposition to Palestinian statehood.²⁷ This political stance, if maintained, could result in Israeli obstruction or even military responses, further undermining the feasibility of this scenario and any sustainable stability or future peace.

Key observations

- A return of the PA to Gaza must be within the framework of broader Palestinian national consensus. A unilateral imposition is likely to provoke resistance by other Palestinian factions, Israel, and the Palestinian public at large.
- The PA currently lacks public legitimacy and institutional capacity to govern Gaza effectively from the get-go; a longer-term political transition would be beneficial rather than a rushed process.²⁸
- Elections, while desirable for legitimacy purposes, are not feasible in the near term given the destruction and displacement of people in Gaza. Furthermore, premature elections often fuel instability, as literature on transitional contexts suggests.
- The PA itself appears hesitant, recognising the deep governance challenges involved and the potential political costs without significant international backing, resources, and preparation.
- The exclusion of existing local (security) governance structures, including the civilian security agencies of the De-Facto Authority (i.e. Civil Police and Civil Defence) would only complicate a smooth transition into stability. Even as of August 2025 these agencies provide some level of security services to Palestinians.

For the outlined reasons, and based on the criteria described, DCAF does not consider this scenario promising in the near future.

Scenario II: Prolonged Israeli military occupation

Another post-war scenario is the possibility of a prolonged Israeli military presence in the Gaza Strip. According to Israeli officials, the Israeli security cabinet has green-lighted a plan to occupy and hold Gaza, or at least large parts of it, indefinitely.²⁹ To maintain long-term security control over the Gaza Strip, the Israeli government has made advanced preparations. This includes creating a network of military roads and outposts, such as the “Netzarim Corridor” south of Gaza City, the “Morag Corridor” in the southern part of the Strip, and a fortified presence along the “Philadelphi Corridor” bordering Egypt. Israeli decisions and steps align with establishing de-facto military administration over Gaza and the declared goal of preventing the return of Hamas and other armed groups to positions of power. Furthermore, the decisions and military operational activities indicate the intention to lay claim to the territory. Israel has also made far-reaching preparations to canalise humanitarian aid distribution through the US-based Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), operating with private

27 Times of Israel, 2025, Jewish News Syndicate, 2025

28 Muggah, 2013.

29 Fabian et al., 2025; Cornwell, 2025; Bunkall, 2025.

security companies (PSCs) with limited transparency, side-stepping humanitarian principles and bypassing and undermining the United Nations system, its specialised agencies, coordinated response, and established emergency cluster system.³⁰

This scenario also appears aligned with the Israeli government's firm opposition to Palestinian statehood, as well as any form of governance in Gaza exercised by the PA. Meanwhile, there is little indication of a defined exit strategy by Israel. On the contrary, the operational logic of permanent security control risks entrenching an open-ended Israeli military occupation that may or may not transition into formal annexation, which would violate international law and ignite local resistance. Together with an increasing sense of Israeli de-facto annexation of the West Bank through intensified settlement activity, military presence and weakening of the PA, the efforts of the Israeli government appear to purposely prevent the realisation of Palestinian political ambitions.

This scenario would bring Israel into conflict with international law. Any attempt to maintain indefinite Israeli control over any part of the oPt, including Gaza, whether through direct military rule or via a proxy civilian administration, would be a continuation of illegal Israeli occupation. Far from stabilising the situation, such a model would likely intensify Palestinian resistance and fuel an already protracted conflict.

Key observations

- This scenario would provoke active opposition from Palestinians, including from armed groups. Any imposed order under occupation would be unstable and generate violence.
- Offering no pathway to Palestinian self-determination or statehood, the model will only deepen grievances, as has historically been the case both before and after the Oslo Accords.
- The approach contravenes international law, as outlined by the International Court of Justice's conclusion of 2024 that Israel's continued presence in the oPt is "unlawful".³¹ Other elements, such as the forced displacement of civilians, denial of access to humanitarian aid, and the potential re-establishment of Israeli settlements within the Strip are also considered in breach of international law and may, as in the case of denial of access to aid, constitute a war crime and crime against humanity.

In summary, this scenario fundamentally runs counter to the principles of sustainable stability and effective governance. Regardless of its likelihood, given the undeniable power that Israel exerts over Gaza and the entire oPt, it is unlikely to yield a successful outcome, given the ongoing dynamics and nature of occupation.

Scenario III: Joint Palestinian governance through a technocratic committee

The third scenario envisions the establishment of a technocratic committee to govern Gaza temporarily. The plan "Early Recovery, Reconstruction, and Development of Gaza", which was developed by Egypt in 2025 and endorsed by the League of Arab States, proposes a six month interim administration composed of independent

³⁰ Psaledakis and Nichols, 2025.

³¹ International Court of Justice, 2024.

Palestinian technocrats unaffiliated with any political factions.³² The committee would operate under the umbrella of the PA, overseeing humanitarian aid distribution and managing Gaza's affairs until the PA can reestablish control. The plan centres on reconstruction efforts which are intended to be Palestinian led but internationally supported.

Such a committee, intended to be non-partisan, has already been established by President Abbas, with tacit agreement from Hamas, proposing a list of 16 individuals to be included. The Egyptian plan suggests a six-month transition period before the PA assumes full control.

Without a national consensus building process, this scenario risks Hamas acting as a spoiler; at least if it perceives that it might be entirely excluded from Palestinian politics once the transition phase ends. As previously noted, elections are not currently feasible, which means this arrangement may effectively establish de-facto PA control in Gaza without a renewed political process, thus extending the political status quo from the West Bank into Gaza. Bringing PA rule back into Gaza without meaningfully addressing the occupation of the West Bank also risks reinforcing territorial fragmentation.

Furthermore, while there are plans for training Palestinian police forces in Egypt for deployment in Gaza, the immediate security vacuum and the presence of various armed Palestinian factions pose significant challenges. The PA forces supervised by the committee would be unlikely to deliver effective security services with such limited capacity. A gradual approach, as outlined by the OSC in the plan cited above, which emphasizes rebuilding local security structures over time, could be an alternative. However, it risks allowing armed gangs and other non-state actors to entrench themselves.

Key observations

Ensuring inclusivity, representativeness, and the credibility of selected individuals is crucial. Establishing a mechanism to resolve decision-making deadlocks would also be essential. However, without a process of national reconciliation or consensus building, alongside genuine democratisation and progress towards ending the occupation, this initiative is likely to fail. It could lead to a de-facto PA takeover without creating the necessary conditions for success, as highlighted in Scenario 1.

- Ensuring inclusivity, representativeness, and the credibility of selected individuals is crucial. A mechanism to resolve decision-making deadlocks would be essential. However, without a comprehensive process of consensus building, democratization, and an end to the occupation this initiative risks failure. It could lead to a de-facto PA takeover without creating the necessary conditions for success, as highlighted in Scenario 1.
- If the committee can initially rely on only a limited pool of 3,000 newly trained security forces, this will be insufficient and would need to be augmented to manage the complex security environment in Gaza. In addition, decisions on the type of security personnel will be critical. A sole focus on police training ignores the myriads of security needs that need to be addressed by other security actors, such as civil defence. A detailed analysis of security needs and challenges is of vital importance before considering deploying security forces.

32 The Arab Republic of Egypt - MFA, 2025.

- The absence of a clear and inclusive political roadmap that details how the plan would be implemented risks undermining the committee's legitimacy and effectiveness, potentially leading to renewed instability and conflict.³³

Considering all the factors outlined above, this scenario would ultimately fail if implemented without stronger democratic guarantees, particularly regarding the phased control by the PA. While the formation of a non-partisan committee is more inclusive than other plans, it still overlooks critical issues that could lead to security vacuums, resistance from the Palestinian public, and fall short of a sustainable transition towards stability.

Scenario IV: Deployment of an international coalition

A fourth scenario involves the deployment of an international coalition to stabilise Gaza, maintain security, and facilitate governance. In July 2024, the UAE called for a temporary international mission to address the humanitarian crisis, establish law and order, and pave the way for reuniting Gaza and the West Bank under a single, legitimate PA.³⁴ However, for such a mission to succeed, it is crucial not only that a clear and legal mandate be established but also that it is accepted by the Palestinian public, and Palestinian factions.

DCAF's January 2024 paper, titled "What we know does not work in terms of Security Sector Governance (SSG) in conflict/post-conflict settings"³⁵ outlined the risks of external interventions, including peacekeeping missions and international coalitions, in conflict-affected or fragile states. The paper highlights key lessons learned, one of which is that without domestic legitimacy, a clear connection to local governance, and realistic exit strategies, an imposed external presence generally fails to provide long-term stability or contribute to effective SSG.

While the UAE specified an official invitation by the PA is required, excluding other Palestinian factions from such an agreement could lead to resistance on the ground and could make the process unworkable from the start. Any external intervention should therefore be based not only on the PA's invitation but also on consensus among all major Palestinian factions. Crucially, any external force must also be seen as legitimate among the Palestinian population. PCPSR data show that only 10 per cent of Palestinians in Gaza support the deployment of a UN Security Council-mandated peacekeeping force with a large presence on the ground.³⁶ While DCAF's March 2025 survey indicates that regional forces enjoy greater acceptance than international troops, Palestinians remain wary of any external intervention, frequently citing their long history of external control, including by neighbouring states. Interventions should therefore maintain a limited footprint, prioritise Palestinian ownership, and incorporate a strong regional component. In addition, any UN-led international or regional mission would also require, at least, the consent of Israel.

Israel has, since the time of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) in the 1950s and 60s, resisted any international presence or external intervention in Gaza. Any peacekeeping force would be required to carefully manage border interactions with Israeli forces to mitigate the risk of escalation. Moreover, capacity-wise, the

33 This point emerged strongly during the two rounds of regional consultations DCAF conducted.

34 Nusseibeh, 2024.

35 DCAF, 2024.

36 PCPSR - Palestinian Centre for Policy and Survey Research, 2024b.

force would need to be able to provide critical technical expertise to the local security forces. Even if adequately staffed, it may lack familiarity with the local context, necessitating close coordination with local actors.

The primary advantages of deploying an international mission would include increased international legitimacy, which could facilitate an influx of resources for rebuilding Gaza, and the provision of a short-term solution to immediate security challenges. With the Palestinian police force severely limited in capacity, an external force could temporarily provide critical expertise, particularly in highly technical areas, including demining. While an external force could serve as a neutral buffer between Israeli forces and Gaza, enabling impartial border management and reducing the risk of direct confrontations, it could also run the risk of being caught in the middle of escalations and itself become a target in the process.

Key observations

- An international coalition could offer the stability needed for reconstruction and political processes to start and develop. However, past lessons strongly suggest that its success will depend on inclusivity, requiring agreement from Palestinian factions and approval from amongst the Gaza population. Regional involvement would enhance the mission's legitimacy and effectiveness but cannot substitute Palestinian consent and ownership. While the issue of consent is complex, the PA is internationally recognised as the legitimate governing body and therefore holds the formal power to grant consent. Nevertheless, given the Palestinian people's history and experience of living under occupation, domination and external control, ensuring Palestinian ownership over civilian matters is essential. This underscores the need for any international mission to maintain a limited footprint, acting in a supportive role, rather than an intrusive one.
- Lessons learned strongly suggest that any international mission should be timebound and work as part of a transition plan for handing over governance and security responsibilities to a legitimate Palestinian body.
- International coalitions will be required to cooperate closely with local actors, including informal security actors such as clans and influential families. They should also rely on existing Palestinian security forces familiar with Gaza and trusted by communities. Any external mission should include a component to coordinate aid delivery through established humanitarian, civil society actors and UN agencies to avoid disrupting aid delivery and reconstruction efforts.

In summary, an international coalition could offer short-term stability and facilitate the initial phase of reconstruction in Gaza. However, its success hinges on broad Palestinian consent, legitimacy, and ownership. A clear, time-bound transition plan towards a consented return of the PA and full Palestinian self-governance would be necessary. Without these elements, such a mission risks lacking the necessary legitimacy and effectiveness to contribute to longer term stability. Given the many challenges, this scenario risks, as well, to ultimately fall short and fail.

Conclusion

The analysis of the four widely discussed post-war governance scenarios for Gaza, (1) the unilateral return of the PA; (2) Israeli re-occupation; (3) governance by a technical committee; and (4) an international coalition reveals significant limitations and risks in all existing plans.

Historical precedents and literature on fragile transition contexts consistently highlight that excluding the population, in this case Palestinians, from meaningful participation absent a framework for national consensus building and a commitment to reform and democratization, undermines the legitimacy and sustainability of any governance efforts, risking ultimately a protracted, unstable and insecure situation.

Among the proposed plans, the plan endorsed by the Arab League stands out for its comprehensive approach, emphasising transitional governance arrangements, reconstruction, and the eventual restoration of Palestinian self-rule. While this plan appears the most realistic, it is not without challenges. These include the need for a broader political strategy that addresses the occupation of both Gaza and the West Bank, ensures a carefully managed return to democratic governance based on a national Palestinian consensus, secures acceptance by key stakeholders, and provides more detailed provisions for security delivery. That said, all the proposed plans, whether associated with the OSC, Egypt or the UAE, offer technical elements that are crucial and should be built on as a complementary effort.

In DCAF's view, given the absence of a clear path forward among the highlighted scenarios, and the uncertainty regarding the longer-term post-war governance for Gaza, immediate security and stabilization should be prioritized as a matter of urgency. These efforts should commence without delay, even prior to a formal ceasefire, and must be designed to facilitate seamless integration into the post-ceasefire period. The objective is to lay a robust foundation for future stability and a political settlement that genuinely reflects the aspirations and needs of the Palestinian people across the oPt. Within this context, DCAF's contribution is to inform and support the collective efforts of both Palestinians and international actors and their strategic thinking on the way forward for Gaza and the oPt as a whole.

3. Towards a promising alternative: Integrating an international intervention with local security mechanisms

This section presents an alternative but complementary vision for governance and security in Gaza through a set of ISGMs. The proposal offers a technical and analytical contribution, contributing to an informed, inclusive discussion grounded in comparative experience, field data, international norms, and respect for local ownership.

Scope & core idea

The proposed ISGMs are designed to explicitly address identified limitations of the existing main proposals. Given the extreme complexity of Gaza's future governance, reconstruction, and development, the alternative presented in this document should not be viewed as a comprehensive, standalone roadmap or an action plan ready for direct implementation. Rather, it should be read as a set of mechanisms grounded in international standards that are, in many respects, complementary to existing plans. For example, the Egyptian plan provides important details on how to rebuild and develop Gaza; details that are not covered in what will be outlined below.

DCAF proposes a three-phased arrangement aimed at achieving a sustained transition towards stability in Gaza:

- **Phase I:** Pre ceasefire – prevent societal and state collapse: The first phase focuses on immediate stabilization through the agreed and safe activation of existing local structures, facilitation of international aid flows, and reinforcement of community-based protection mechanisms.
- **Phase II:** Post ceasefire – immediate stabilization (~ Year 1): The second phase envisions the establishment of a hybrid governance model: a Palestinian Technical Gaza Committee (TGC) working in coordination with a Gaza Regional Mission (GIM) that primarily supports security functions and institutional reactivation.
- **Phase III:** Longer term political transition (~ Year 2 – Year 4): In the final phase, authority would be gradually transferred to a legitimate and representative PA government that unifies Gaza and the West Bank, coinciding with a comprehensive reconstruction process that builds on what has been achieved under early recovery

Each phase addresses both governance arrangements and security mechanisms, recognising that security is inherently a political process and cannot be considered in isolation from political dynamics. While DCAF presents its proposal in three distinct phases with defined timelines, the proposed schedule should be understood as indicative rather than fixed, a heuristic guide rather than a rigid framework. Ultimately, evolving contexts and developments on the ground will require flexibility and adaptation, with the overriding priority remaining Palestinian ownership and the provision of security for Palestinians.

Fundamental considerations

While DCAF proposes a set of dedicated mechanisms for each phase, six fundamental considerations guide its suggestions:

- **Factor in security governance in early recovery and reconstruction processes:** Security must be integrated from the very outset into any early recovery or reconstruction process. Establishing a secure environment for all Palestinians irrespective of age, gender or other characteristics is a prerequisite for humanitarian aid delivery, infrastructure rehabilitation, and the restoration of essential services. In the absence of effective security arrangements, recovery efforts risk being undermined by instability, renewed violence, or the emergence of criminal or armed groups able to fill power vacuums. Moreover, linking security governance to broader state-building and consensus building efforts helps create a foundation for long-term stability, rather than short-term fixes.
- **Build on existing local (security) governance structures:** To ensure effectiveness and local ownership, any future governance arrangements must take into account and be built on existing functioning structures. This is the most effective way to address security challenges in Gaza and connect to local communities. In doing so, contextual knowledge can be integrated, a security vacuum avoided, and legitimacy upheld.
- **Differentiate between security agencies with military and civilian mandates:** It is crucial to distinguish between civilian and military-oriented security agencies of the De-Facto Authority. As DCAF research has shown, the civil defence and civil police under the DFA, with a civilian mandate by law, have remained committed to their civilian missions throughout the war, despite being frequent targets of Israeli military operations.³⁷ International actors should acknowledge this distinction – at least on a technical level – and provide support for these civilian agencies to uphold basic governance functions, mitigate the risk of a governance vacuum, and consolidate the presence of Palestinian institutions in Gaza. It is equally important to engage Israel in recognizing this differentiation.
- **Humanitarian aid and relief:** In line with Article 55 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, humanitarian aid must be delivered unconditionally. Both humanitarian aid and relief should be a core component of any planning for Gaza, fully integrated within the broader humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) “triple nexus”.³⁸ These three elements are deeply interconnected and, if approached holistically, can reinforce one another in a self-sustaining, positive feedback loop. Treating them in isolation risks undermining the potential for recovery, stability, and long-term development.
- **Reform of the Palestinian Authority and national consensus building:** DCAF’s data shows that the PA has limited legitimacy. Furthermore, the March 2025 Arab League Summit reaffirmed the need for national elections. However, significant challenges persist regarding the timing and feasibility of holding elections under current conditions. Considering this, it is essential to explore alternative pathways for the PA to rebuild public trust and legitimacy. The most effective approach would be to embark on a comprehensive reform process without delay. This must be grounded in a process of consensus building

³⁷ Sauerland, Redwan, and Ouda, 2025.

³⁸ McCandless, 2021; OECD, 2019.

among all Palestinian factions through an inclusive and participatory dialogue. These two interlinked processes are not merely institutional tasks but form a broader political and social effort to restore Palestinian agency and ownership across the oPt, while ensuring that governance structures are capable, accountable, and representative.

- **Enable Palestinian statehood across the oPt:** While this paper focuses on political and security governance in Gaza, restoring Palestinian political agency in Gaza must go hand in hand with strengthening Palestinian institutions in the West Bank. Ending Israeli occupation and de facto annexation is essential, as lasting stability in the oPt can only be achieved if the PA's return to Gaza is embedded in a wider process of political unification and preservation of territorial integrity across the entirety of the oPt.

Phase I: Before a ceasefire

The immediate priority in the Gaza Strip is to reach a lasting ceasefire or truce. In the absence of such a ceasefire, no ISGMs can alleviate the immense suffering of the Palestinian population. Nonetheless, certain measures can and should be implemented without delay to prevent a complete governance collapse and to lay the groundwork for stabilisation. The first phase of the proposed ISGMs therefore constitute immediate steps the international actors should consider as efforts to secure a ceasefire continue.

Governance mechanisms: Preventing social and political chaos

- **Create the conditions for a proper political framework:** The right conditions for the return of the Palestinian Authority (PA) to Gaza must be supported from the very beginning of any stabilisation efforts. This requires launching a comprehensive, multi-level reform agenda for the PA and its institutions, especially in the security and justice sectors. Reforms must address long-standing issues of transparency, professionalism, and responsiveness to Palestinian needs. In parallel, a process must be launched to unify the fragmented Palestinian political landscape. This involves creating inclusive dialogue platforms for all Palestinian factions, mediating long-standing disputes, and agreeing on a shared political vision for governance of a unified oPt.
- **Support for existing local governance structures:** Wherever possible, existing local structures that currently provide security services should be recognized, supported, and integrated into the early stabilization processes. These include, most notably, the civil police, the civil defence, municipalities as well as the local emergency committees, set-up at the local level and staffed with technical officials of security and justice agencies. All these local agencies are maintaining some form of governance in Gaza, and have managed to succeed in upholding a minimum level of public order, showing the continued presence of Palestinian institutions, thus preventing a failed state scenario.³⁹ The involvement of local governance structures, to commence even before a formal ceasefire and continuing into the following phases, would be instrumental in reducing the risk of a power vacuum and promote a safer, more predictable environment. This

39 Sauerland, Redwan, and Ouda, 2025.

approach is essential to fostering local ownership, legitimacy, and trust in the institutions tasked with maintaining order.

- **UN governance of humanitarian aid delivery and distribution:** To prevent the politicization and militarization of aid, the delivery and distribution of humanitarian aid must be managed by neutral, competent humanitarian organizations that uphold the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence. Relevant UN agencies, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), are both integral and critical to this process and should not be substituted by alternative mechanisms. Effective coordination and engagement with local community leadership will be crucial to ensure accountability, effective and equal access, as well as efficient distribution and address the specific needs of the population.
- **Leveraging existing community-based protection strategies:** It is essential to recognize that local communities are not passive victims but active agents shaping their security, even under dire conditions.⁴⁰ Despite ongoing attacks on civilian infrastructure, communities have organised to protect themselves. Existing community-based protection strategies, for example, churches and mosques providing shelter, should be strengthened, drawing on best practices and coordinated with UN agencies, civil society organisations, and local leaders, including clan and family heads. This approach not only enhances protection from direct hostilities but also promotes community stability amid the social volatility created by the war. In line with international standards, protection strategies should be informed by a detailed protection analysis, and make use of existing resources and expertise, including through the Global Protection Cluster.⁴¹

Security mechanisms: Alleviating the humanitarian crisis

- **Facilitation of humanitarian aid:** Israel is bound by Article 55 of the Fourth Geneva Convention to allow the entry of humanitarian aid and reestablish the humanitarian notification system. Clear and credible coordination mechanisms must be provided (and whenever existing, respected) with aid providers, extending to local humanitarian agencies such as the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS). International organisations must be allowed safe and unimpeded access across the oPt.
- **Clear establishment of humanitarian areas:** Centres equipped to shelter forcibly displaced people and secure their vital needs should be established within clearly demarcated areas. Drawing on best practices, humanitarian organisations or in their absence local CSOs should run humanitarian safety audits, making sure that such zones are as safe as possible for people with different personal characteristics based on an inclusive Age Gender and Diversity (AGD) approach.⁴²
- **Immediate support for Civil Defence:** Civil Defence reported to DCAF that their work is primarily hindered by Israeli targeting, a shortage of manpower, and a lack of heavy equipment. Immediate provision of equipment – alongside adequate expertise – is essential to enable civil defence teams to clear rubble, create humanitarian spaces, and establish provisional shelters. Ensuring that their activities are not

40 Kirk, Pendle, and Diing Akoi, 2025; Kaplan, 2017.

41 Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2023.

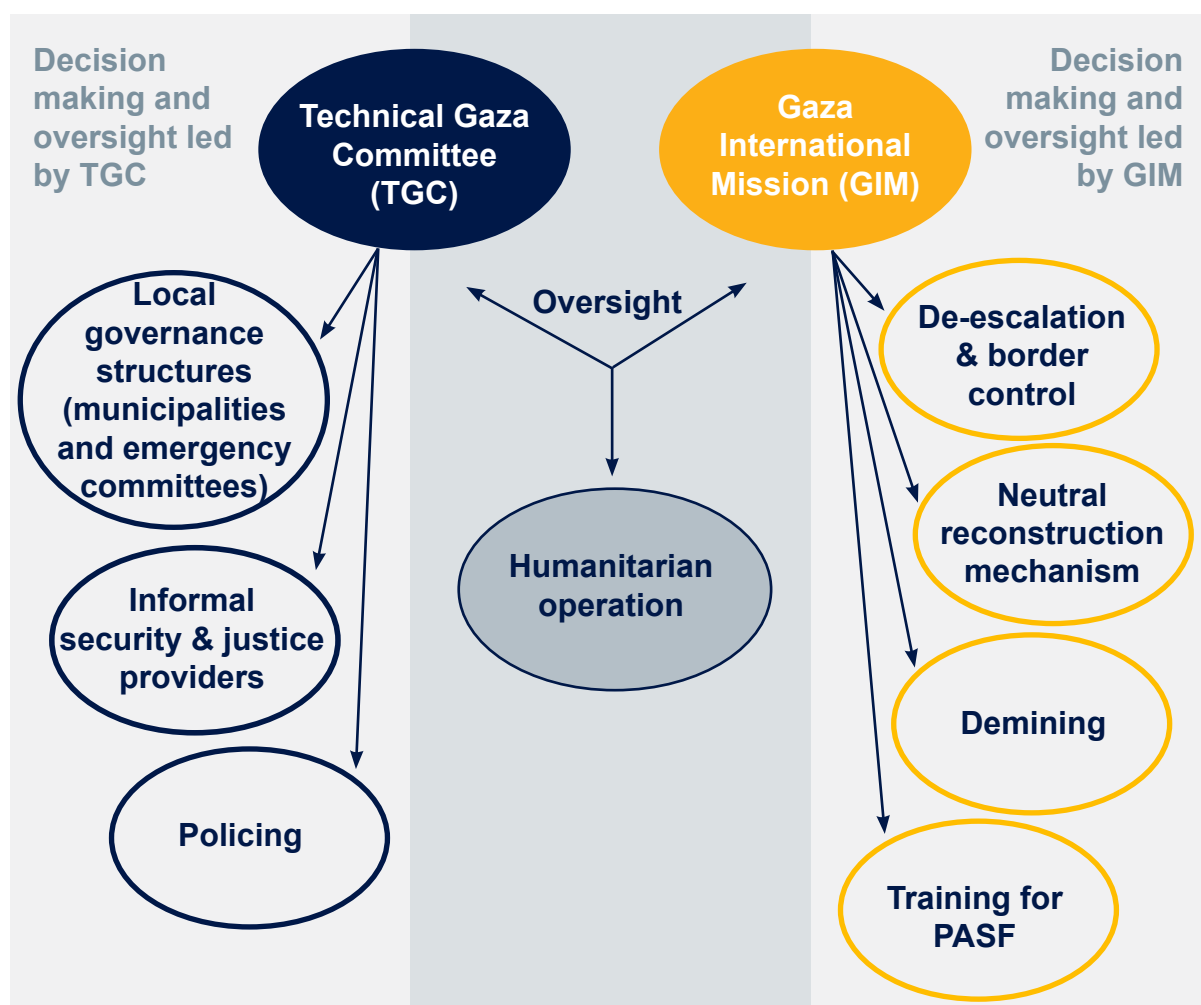
42 UNICEF, 2018.

targeted by Israeli forces is critical. Absentee personnel from the PA's Civil Defence could be mobilised to reinforce the DFA Civil Defence operations.

Phase II: The preparatory period immediately after the ceasefire (~Year 1)

In the critical period following a ceasefire, establishing effective interim governance and security mechanisms is paramount to prevent political fragmentation and ensure the delivery of essential services. This phase, lasting approximately one year, will provide the necessary time to stabilize the situation, restore public order, and lay the foundation for a sustainable political transition. Key actions during this phase should include strengthening local governance structures, rebuilding essential infrastructure, and addressing security concerns. International actors must work in close coordination with Palestinian leadership and local actors to foster inclusive governance and prevent the emergence of power vacuums. These efforts will form the building blocks for longer term peace and stability.

DCAF's proposal deliberately builds on the August 2024 OSC plan in combination with the Arab plan. This includes the idea of a technocratic committee with an international mission. However, DCAF emphasises the need for a longer transition period before a return of a reformed PA. As a result, DCAF proposes a joint governance model as outlined in graph 3 and explained in more detail below.



Graph number 2: Roles and responsibilities of TGC and GIM

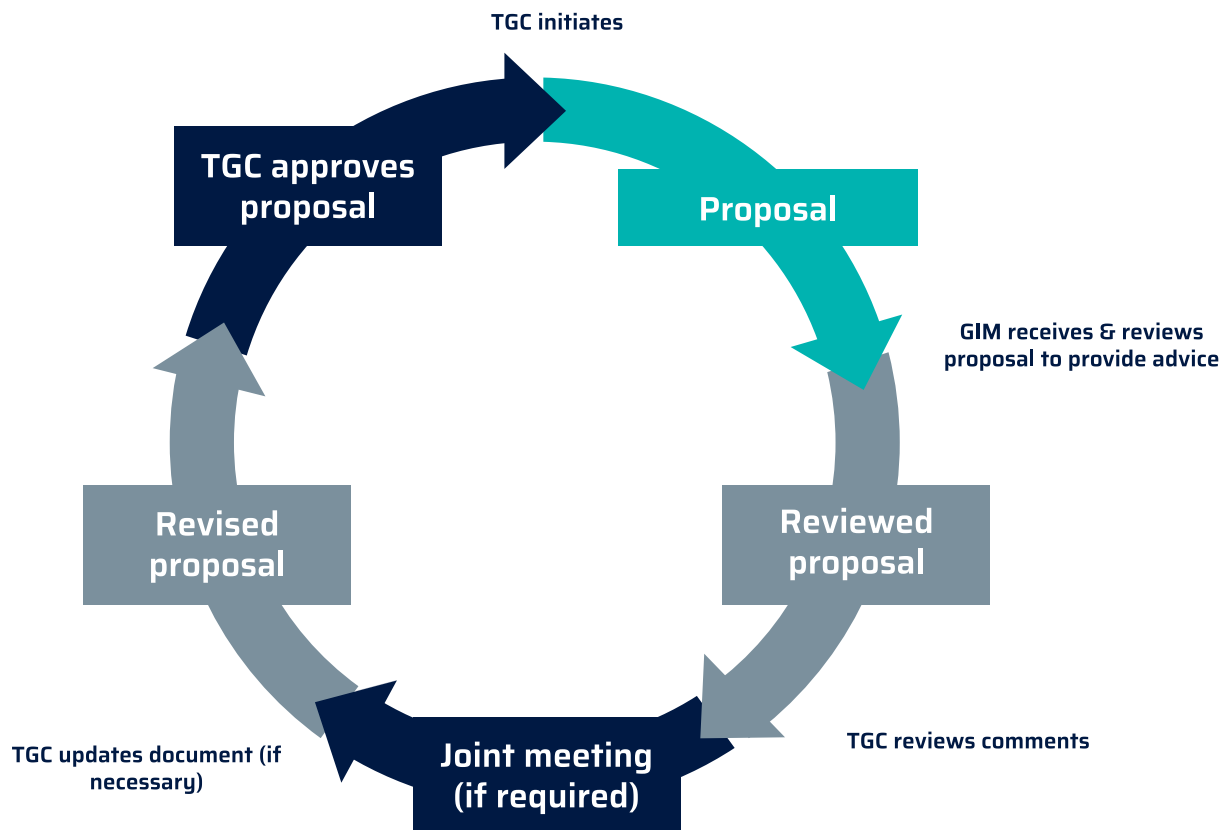
Governance mechanisms: Building the foundations for transitional governance

- **Establishment of an inclusive Technical Gaza Committee (TGC):** Building on inclusive consultations with all Palestinian factions, a technical (Palestinian) committee should be established via Presidential Decree of the Palestinian President to oversee Gaza's civil administration, working alongside an international mission (see below). The committee should consist of 11 to 15 independent technocrats and representatives, led by a rotating chairperson selected by the committee members. Its members should reflect diversity in expertise, geographic origin, gender, and age, with the majority hailing from Gaza. The committee should be formed prior to the start of Phase 2. Its mandate must be time-bound, with clearly delineated authority to oversee Gaza's civil administration during the transitional period, ensuring inclusive, accountable, and non-partisan governance until legitimate Palestinian institutions are fully reestablished. The committee would operate within existing Palestinian legal frameworks, functioning independently and autonomously, but remaining accountable to the PA through a carefully designed normative framework that guarantees full transparency. Independent Palestinian bodies, such as the Anti-Corruption Commission and the Independent Commission for Human Rights, should exercise oversight over the TGC's work.
- **Establish and mandate a Gaza international mission (GIM):** A United Nations-led or supported international mission should be mandated to temporarily deploy to Gaza in a technical support role. This deployment must be based on the consent and active involvement of the PA in shaping a clear and time-bound mandate, with the tacit consent of other Palestinian factions. Such consent should be formalized by a United Nations Security Council mandate under Chapter VI of the UN Charter. Opting for a more robust Chapter VII mandate risks being perceived as invasive and externally imposed. The GIM should be tasked with five core responsibilities: a) border management, b) de-escalation coordination with Israel, c) oversight of a new Gaza reconstruction mechanism, d) demining/ unexploded ordnance clearance operations, and e) training Palestinian security forces for Gaza. Additionally, the GIM should provide advisory support and technical expertise to the TGC and monitor the TGC's compliance with international standards and international law.
- **Palestinian ownership supported by the GIM:** The relationship between TGC and GIM should be institutionalised through a coordination mechanism that ensures regular communication, shared planning, and mutual accountability. The TGC will be responsible for decision-making on civilian matters in Gaza, including policing, civil defence operations, directing local governance structures, and integrating informal security and justice actors. The TGC should consult GIM experts on key issues through a structured consultative feedback loop to improve transparency (see Graphic 3 below). The GIM will operate independently in its assigned areas of responsibility but should coordinate closely with the TGC on humanitarian operations, ensuring joint oversight and cooperation. In line with international best practices, a mechanism to prevent major disagreements should be established, such as a neutral arbitration committee.⁴³ The partnership between TGC and GIM will enhance legitimacy, bridge the gap between security operations and

43 Hartzell and Hoddie, 2019; Hartzell and Hoddie, 2007.

civil administration, and support the transfer of authority to the Palestinian Authority during Phase 3.

- **Coordination with local entities:** Engagement with existing emergency committees, civil society organizations, communities, and informal leaders, such as clan and family heads, is essential. This collaboration will enhance the effectiveness of local governance and the delivery of security services.



Graph number 3: Consultation loop between TGC and GIM

Security mechanisms: Stabilizing Gaza's security and justice sector

- **Complete withdrawal of Israeli troops:** Phase II is conditional on the withdrawal of all Israeli troops from the entirety of Gaza. Hence, Phase II must begin with such a complete withdrawal and will be accompanied by the deployment of the GIM.
- **GIM force composition:** The GIM should be composed of highly skilled personnel, including men and women, with a significant proportion from the region to facilitate effective communication with the TGC and ensure cultural sensitivity in engaging with Gaza's population. In its composition, the GIM should include a small contingent of police in addition to:
 - Border security personnel: Deployed to manage and secure Gaza's border crossings, in close coordination with existing missions such as EUBAM.
 - Technical experts: Specialist teams with expertise in demining and UXO clearance, policing, post-war reconstruction, and infrastructure rehabilitation will play a critical role in enhancing overall improvement in physical safety and reconstruction. These experts will provide direct technical support for

operations on the ground while also advising the TGC on security sector governance, capacity-building, and best practices.

- **Creation of a de-escalation and security coordination mechanism with Israel:** Following best practices for conflict management, a permanent, third-party facilitated coordination and de-escalation mechanism should be established, with clear real-time communication channels between Israel and the GIM/TGC. This would help manage security incidents and reduce the risk of escalation.
- **Integrated police mission:** Immediate stabilization requires leveraging remaining local security structures, including the DFA Civil Police. Existing police personnel should be brought under the authority of the TGC, e.g. the existing Civil Police of the DFA. The police force should be reinforced by absentee personnel from the PA, volunteers from the Popular Protection Committees (PPC), a newly formed community police force in Gaza, and newly trained recruits in line with the OSC plan. Recruitment of women should be a priority to reflect the diversity of the population, but also to ensure that the police is equipped to respond to the specific needs of women and girls, particularly in contexts of displacement and gender-based violence. All personnel should undergo a recruitment process based strictly on professional standards and requirements, in accordance with Palestinian law. Existing forces and newly trained personnel should operate jointly under a unified command structure accountable to the TGC, ensuring the effective integration of local knowledge and community trust into security operations.
- **Private security companies:** PSCs should be engaged only for narrowly defined technical tasks, such as providing specialised expertise in demining and UXO clearance. Based on international standards, any company operating in Gaza must be registered with the Palestinian Ministry of National Economy and be a member of the International Code of Conduct Association (ICoCA). Furthermore, recruiting states should establish legislation and contract PSCs based on best practices.⁴⁴ Recruiting states should also accede to the DCAF-administered Montreux Document to re-affirm compliance with legal obligations under international law.
- **Usage of informal security and justice providers:** Given the limited capacity of formal security forces, it is essential to involve informal actors, such as clans and influential families, that currently provide arbitration and local justice services. While their engagement can help fill immediate gaps, safeguards must be put in place to prevent exclusionary practices or human rights abuses. In particular, efforts should be made to promote the inclusion of women and youth in community justice processes, challenging traditional power dynamics and opening space for more representative forms of governance. The role of informal providers should be framed as temporary, with the clear intention of transitioning to inclusive, accountable, and formal justice systems.
- **Neutral reconstruction mechanism:** The reconstruction process must start immediately. A new reconstruction mechanism to regulate the entry of goods and materials into Gaza must be established. It must move beyond the restrictive framework created after the 2014 war, which hampered reconstruction efforts.⁴⁵

44 DCAF - Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, 2016; 2017.

45 Elkahlout, ed., 2024; Milton, Elkahlout, and Attallah, 2024.

In the new mechanism, all goods should be permitted entry, except those with clear military applications or dual use, based on international export control regimes such as the Wassenaar Arrangement.

- **Weapon control and management:** Under the supervision of the TGC, and with operational support from the GIM, a structured weapons control and management mechanism should be established to secure existing weapons stockpiles, prevent further proliferation, and implement effective tracking and storage systems to reduce uncontrolled circulation of arms. This includes establishing centralised, monitored weapon storage facilities. This process should be carefully designed to serve as a confidence-building measure linked to political dialogue and security sector integration. This mechanism would act as a prelude to a comprehensive DDR process at a later stage that should offer credible pathways for reintegration into civilian life or the joining of reformed Palestinian security institutions under clear and accountable frameworks.
- **Facilitation of safe returns:** Establishing UXO-cleared areas where people can access relief and social services is vital for the return of displaced individuals to the locations of their homes and communities. This process should be coordinated with local authorities and United Nations agencies, including UNRWA, to ensure the sustainable restoration of essential services.

Phase III: Medium-term reconstruction and political transition (~Year 2 – Year 4)

Phase III marks the critical transition toward a unified PA-led Palestinian governance framework and sustainable, locally led security. After approximately two years, it is envisaged that authority would shift from the TGC to the PA. This phase is designed to not only stabilise Gaza but to lay the foundations for inclusive political representation and resilient Palestinian institutions and structures that operate as a peace enabler. Core actions include rebuilding administrative capacity, revitalising livelihoods, and reconstituting local security and justice systems - embedding efforts within a rights-based, community-driven framework. Together, these efforts aim to transform Gaza from a context of prolonged crisis into a space of recovery and stability, conducive for longer term peace under the PA.

Governance: Implementing the gradual return of a unified Palestinian government

- **Return of the Palestinian Authority:** In Phase III, the Palestinian Authority should resume governance of Gaza. This return must be contingent upon a national consensus building process and the revitalisation of reforms and a democratic framework. Consensus building will require inclusive political dialogue among all Palestinian factions, while a credible democratic process will depend on substantial institutional reforms and the conduct of transparent national and local elections. Ideally, national and local elections should be held in Year 2, paving the way for a newly elected PA government to assume authority in Gaza by the end of that period (see timeline). While the proposed timeline provides a useful reference, it must remain flexible and responsive to evolving political and security dynamics. The re-establishment of credible Palestinian institutions capable of unifying Gaza and the West Bank will also necessitate sustained international efforts aimed at ending the occupation.

- **Handover of functions from the TGC to the PA:** Following the elections, the PA will formally return to governing Gaza, leading to the dissolution of the TGC and the transfer of its civil administration functions to the PA. This will mark the unification of governance structures across the West Bank and Gaza under a single, legitimate PA. Additionally, the PA will assume responsibilities held by the GIM following the latter's departure at the end of Year 4, ensuring a full transition to Palestinian-led governance and security management.
- **Integration of civil society and traditional actors into governance:** Informal structures, such as clan-associated authorities and civil society organisations, should be engaged to support the justice system and help provide local government services during the first two years of this phase (Years 2 and 3). Their roles must be clearly defined, temporary, and subject to oversight.
- **Establishing building blocks for future governance:** Laying the foundations for Palestinian self-governance requires investing in core administrative capacities, institutions, and accountable service delivery mechanisms. In line with international standards of good governance, over the course of Phase III, efforts must be invested into prioritizing inclusivity, local ownership, and representation in security sector governance, creating a governance structure that can eventually transition into a unified and democratically legitimized Palestinian state.⁴⁶

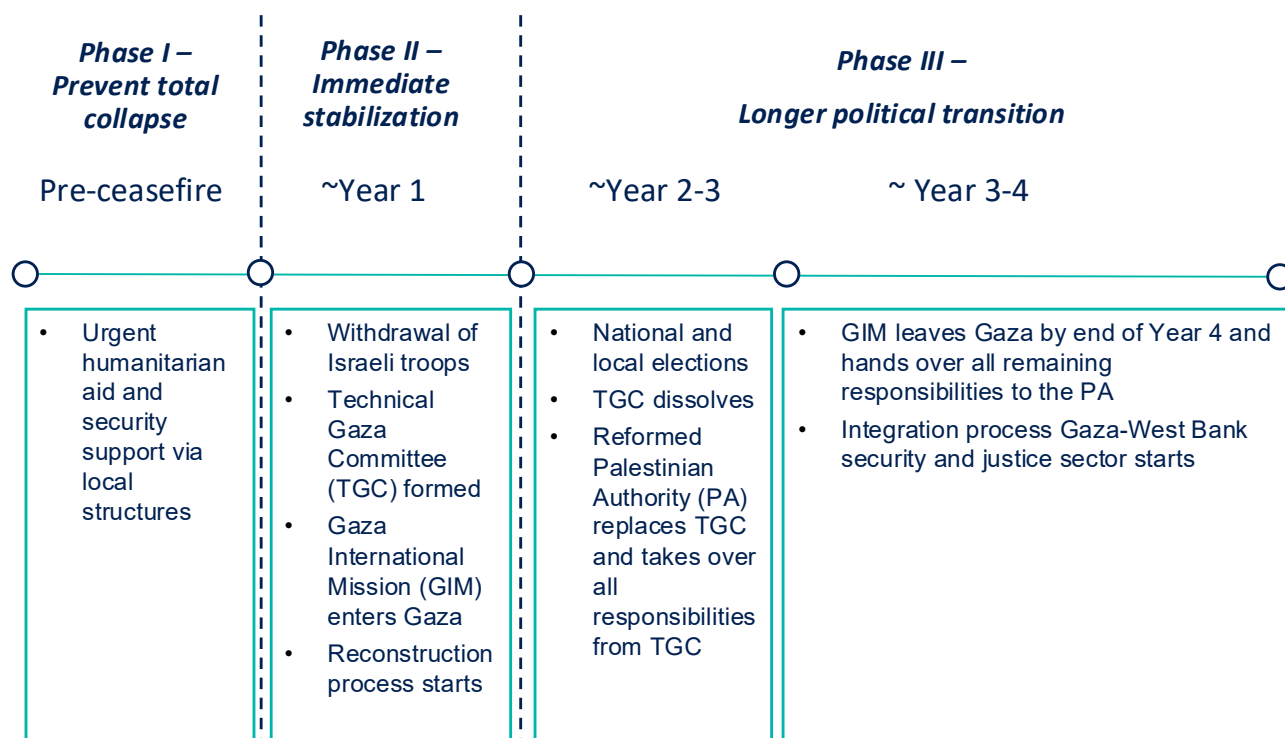
Security mechanisms: Restoring security and stability

- **Strategic reconstruction process:** A comprehensive reconstruction effort, closely linked to systematic demining and UXO clearance, must take centre stage in Phase III. The Arab League's plan offers a solid foundation for this process. Reconstruction should be seen as an opportunity to build back better rather than merely restore the pre-war status quo. This means not only rebuilding essential services such as water, electricity, healthcare and education to address immediate needs, but also strategically modernise Gaza's urban infrastructure, housing, schools, roads, and utilities, through an inclusive approach that actively involves affected populations in planning.
- **Returning personal agency to Palestinians:** Reconstruction must go hand in hand with revitalising livelihoods by supporting local businesses, creating jobs, and restoring agriculture and fisheries, enabling families to regain self-sufficiency. Human capital development, through education, vocational training, and psychosocial support, should re-empower Palestinians of Gaza to drive their own long-term recovery. This process must be driven bottom-up, with Palestinian civil society playing a central role to ensure a rights-based, sustainable, and inclusive recovery. Particular attention must be given to women and youth. Empowering these groups means not only involving them in planning and implementation but also actively challenging traditional gender roles and age-based hierarchies that restrict their agency. For example, livelihood and training initiatives should include specific provisions for young women, mothers, and adolescent girls, ensuring they can participate meaningfully despite caregiving responsibilities or social constraints. The same should be given to people with disabilities.

46 Council of Europe, 2008; Addink, 2019.

- **Alleviation of the humanitarian crisis and internal displacement:** Long-term stabilization requires sustained efforts to address the consequences of mass displacement and deep humanitarian crisis in Gaza. This includes continued efforts to enable safe access for people to their former home areas, if desired, and the restoration of basic services and infrastructure, ensuring secure access to aid and livelihoods, and integrating displaced populations into planning for reconstruction and governance, with protection mechanisms in place to prevent people from being forced to return to areas other than those of their own informed choice or being forced into another, renewed displacement situation. Coordination between local authorities, international actors, and civil society will be key to a rights-based, sustainable recovery process.
- **Reconstitution of Gaza's security agencies:** Gaza's Civil Police and Civil Defence forces should be rebuilt as community-oriented, people-centred institutions, with a strong emphasis on community engagement, gender-sensitive practices, and proper training in the lawful use of force. Their consolidation should draw on existing personnel under DFA control, pre-2007 PA ("absentee") personnel, and newly recruited, trained staff. Training should be continuous and ongoing, with the number of Palestinian Civil Police progressively increasing over time. While a ratio of 2.5 police officers per 1,000 inhabitants and 1 civil defence officer per 1,000 inhabitants is often used as a benchmark, international best practices recommend determining precise staffing levels via a workload and discretionary time assessment. Recruitment of security personnel based on political affiliation must be strictly avoided.⁴⁷
- **Reactivation and reconstitution of justice services:** Justice delivery should resume through a combination of existing courts, functioning justice services, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, and digital platforms to address legal needs despite damaged infrastructure. In the absence of adequate prisons or detention centres, alternative sentencing options must be introduced and ideally retained even after new facilities are built, as part of broader penal system reform.
- **Integration of Palestinian security and justice agencies:** Following the return of the PA, existing security and justice institutions operating under the TGC should be placed under the authority of national Palestinian institutions. These agencies should be fully integrated into a unified institutional and legal framework, harmonising structures and practices across the West Bank and Gaza. This integration ensures coherent governance and creates a unified Palestinian security and justice system.
- **Transitional justice mechanism:** Transitional justice and reparation mechanisms must provide Palestinians with redress for harms suffered. Reparations could take the form of lump-sum payments or be tied to specific needs, such as housing reconstruction, but it is critical that affected individuals retain meaningful agency in the process. The transitional justice and reparation mechanisms should not be tied in any way to other processes or mechanisms related to Palestine refugee status and the Palestinian right of return.

47 McCabe, 2013; Wilson and Grammich, 2024; Center for Public Safety Management, 2014.



Graph number 4: Timeline of ISGMs

4. Evaluating DCAF's Interim Security Governance Mechanism

Based on the criteria outlined in section two, DCAF has evaluated the feasibility of the proposed ISGMs.

Legitimacy: Is the proposed governing actor perceived as legitimate by the Palestinian public?

DCAF's proposal is grounded in legitimacy among the Palestinian public and factions in two main ways:

- **Palestinian acceptance and inclusive representation:** DCAF's proposal promotes inclusive governance and Palestinian ownership via the Technical Gaza Committee (TGC). This approach contrasts with what is perceived as externally imposed solutions, which lack support among the Palestinian public. It also addresses the weak support for the current Fatah (10 per cent) and Hamas leadership (26 per cent) among Palestinians in Gaza.⁴⁸
- **Alignment with public opinion:** DCAF's March 2025 data, as well as PCPSR data shows that public opinion strongly indicates that the PA's return to Gaza must be contingent on meaningful reforms and democratic renewal. By linking the PA's return to broader democratic and consensus building processes backed by regional actors, DCAF's proposal aligns with public sentiment.⁴⁹

The proposed arrangements place Palestinian leadership, inclusivity, and public opinion at the heart of the governance transition by combining local authority, international support, and a return of a unified PA government conditioned upon democratization and national consensus building.

Spoilers: Are key actors excluded from the arrangement and therefore likely to undermine it?

Excluding influential actors from post-war governance arrangements risks resistance and destabilization. DCAF's scenario mitigates this risk by:

- **Inclusive selection process for the TGC:** A key aspect of DCAF's proposal is an inclusive mechanism for the formation of the TGC. Similar proposals already have the support of Palestinian factions. This minimizes early opposition and instead creates buy-in across Palestinian factions.
- **GIM provides reassurance:** Authority in Gaza is subject to support by a Gaza International Mission (GIM). The non-political, technocratic nature of the TGC also offers external actors, such as Israel, a reason to avoid acting as spoilers, while enabling de-escalation and coordination mechanisms via the GIM.
- **Conditioning the PA's return to a reform process:** The proposal avoids a premature return of the PA and contentious early elections. By linking the PA's re-entry to phased reform and consensus-building processes, factions are given time to adjust, discouraging spoiler behaviour and supporting gradual re-engagement.

48 PCPSR - Palestinian Centre for Policy and Survey Research, 2024b.

49 PCPSR - Palestinian Centre for Policy and Survey Research, 2024b.

The proposal partially mitigates the spoiler risk by emphasizing inclusivity, phased power-sharing, and regional engagement. Nonetheless, there is no guarantee that spoiler threats can be fully eliminated. Here, the major risk lies within Israel's refusal to an eventual PA presence in Gaza and Palestinian statehood. However, the TCG structure of the ISGMs can provide some time to build trust and stability, and for the international community to advocate for a PA return.

Capacity: Does the proposed actor or coalition have the ability to effectively govern Gaza and maintain security?

ISGMs must demonstrate immediate operational viability and long-term potential to build local security governance. DCAF's proposal ensures sufficient capacity through three key aspects:

- **Combined strengths:** DCAF's proposal combines the TGC's local legitimacy, residual capacities and contextual understanding with the GIM's technical capacities and expertise.
- **Inclusion of local security structures:** DCAF's proposal uniquely builds on existing formal and informal local structures, such as Civil Defence forces, rather than excluding personnel over factional affiliation.
- **Time-window for training local security forces:** The presence of the GIM, along with the technical expertise it provides in specialised areas, such as mine and UXO clearance, bridges initial capacity gaps and creates a reasonable time window to train Palestinian security.

The proposal balances external support with local ownership, creating a realistic pathway for restoring governance in Gaza.

Path to long-term stability: Does the arrangement lay the groundwork for sustainable peace?

DCAF's proposal contributes to laying the foundation for long-term stability and peace. It promotes realistic prospects for sustainable peace in Gaza and the broader oPt through::

- **Phased political transition and path to Palestinian statehood:** The proposal accounts for the oPt's fragmented security landscape by including diverse actors in governance. This inclusive approach supports a gradual transition to unified, democratic Palestinian self-governance across the oPt.
- **Comprehensive reconstruction and institutional reconstitution:** Beyond physical infrastructure, the proposal focuses on rebuilding key institutions, particularly in the security and justice sectors, to ensure governance is capable, accountable, and resilient.
- **Stabilisation measures:** The plan promotes de-escalation mechanisms with Israel, helping to reduce tensions and support future conflict mitigation. It also aims to enable humanitarian and UN agencies to operate effectively, ensuring essential services reach civilians, supporting the governing authorities and reinforcing a stable environment conducive to peace. This is further supported by a dedicated weapon management mechanism as a prelude to a full DDR process.

While the proposal can make an important contribution towards sustainable peace, peace ultimately depends not only on stability in Gaza, but also on a broader political process between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, one that includes an end to the occupation and the establishment of a viable Palestinian state in line with Palestinian aspirations.

Responsive to security needs: How does the arrangement respond to security needs of the population?

ISGMs must address the security needs of the population, not only individual safety but also broader societal stability. DCAF's proposal meets both dimensions through:

- **Humanitarian access and dedicated areas:** The plan promotes secure and sustained access for humanitarian aid and the establishment of humanitarian areas with centres equipped to shelter forcibly displaced people and secure their vital needs demarcated areas.
- **Support for local security structures:** By integrating existing local actors into the governance framework, the proposal enables trusted, localised security provision. This affirms Palestinians' trust in their own institutions and reinforces national agency.
- **Neutral and depoliticised reconstruction mechanism:** The proposal seeks to establish a neutral, conflict-independent reconstruction mechanism that allows timely, sufficient, and transparent reconstruction that meets Palestinian needs.

The plan addresses both the immediate and structural security concerns of the population; however, effectively meeting these security needs will also require the allocation of sufficient resources to fund, staff, and sustain the ISGMs proposed by DCAF.

Conclusion

The occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) urgently requires sustainable, adaptive, and locally grounded solutions that not only address the immediate humanitarian and security needs of the population but also lay the groundwork for long-term political unity and institutional stability across Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem.

Due to the devastating consequences of the Gaza war, this paper focused on the Gaza Strip. In the paper, DCAF critically examined four scenarios linked to plans by regional and international actors for future governance in Gaza and proposes a complementary set of Interim Security Governance Mechanisms (ISGMs), developed through extensive consultations, field research, and comparative analysis. The ISGMs outlined by DCAF would address urgent security and governance needs on the ground while incrementally advancing broader goals of reunification, institutional legitimacy, and sustainable peace. Rather than imposing a top-down model, the proposal emphasises pragmatic, inclusive approaches that centre Palestinian agency, ownership, and participation at every stage. It envisions a phased process: an initial intervention phase; a transitional period led jointly by a Technical Gaza Committee (TGC) and a Gaza International Mission (GIM); and, ultimately, the return of the PA with reformed and democratically legitimised institutions. Each phase is accompanied by tailored governance and security mechanisms designed to meet the evolving challenges of the context.

Although focused on Gaza, these ISGMs are situated within a broader vision for sustainable peace and stability across the entire oPt, anchored in the reunification of Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem under a single, accountable Palestinian Authority operating under the principles of good governance. It is envisaged that such reunification must emerge through a comprehensive reform and renewal process that rebuilds the legitimacy of Palestinian institutions from the ground up. The process must be rooted in national consensus - inclusive of political factions, civil society actors, and the broader Palestinian public. It must also be accompanied by sustained international engagement aimed at addressing and ultimately ending Israeli occupation as a prerequisite for durable peace.

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