



The “Board of Peace,” established by U.S. President Donald Trump in October 2025, has announced a significant breakthrough for Gaza. As Bulgarian diplomat Nickolay Mladenov, chief negotiator for the Board of Peace, explained on the social media platform “X,” a new agreement has been reached on the demilitarization of the Gaza Strip and the establishment of a civilian administration there. However, uncertainty still surrounds the two core elements of the agreement—which is essentially just a roadmap—namely, the disarmament of the terrorist organization Hamas and Israel’s withdrawal.

From Sacha Wigdorovits

On “X,” Nickolay Mladenov wrote: “The withdrawal must proceed in tandem with disarmament.” While he avoids linking the word “withdrawal” to the Israeli army and the word “disarmament” to the terrorist organizations Hamas and Islamic Jihad, it is clear that these parties are the ones he is referring to.

However, by using the term “in lockstep,” Mladenov directly contradicts a statement that U.S. President Donald Trump himself posted on social media. In that post, Trump writes: “Only after the disarmament [of the terrorist organizations, Ed.] has taken place will the Israeli forces withdraw.”

The text of the new 15-point “roadmap” published by the Associated Press news agency seems to support Mladenov’s account. Point 8, “Disarmament,” states: “This process is linked to a phased Israeli withdrawal.”

## **An IDF withdrawal before Hamas is completely disarmed is unthinkable**

However, neither the current government in Jerusalem nor any potential successor government following the October 27 elections will agree to a withdrawal of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) before Hamas and Islamic Jihad have been completely disarmed. This is because Israel would then run the risk of Palestinian terrorist organizations retaining power in the Gaza Strip as soon as the threat posed by the Israeli army is removed. This remains true even if they now solemnly declare their intention to hand over control of Gaza to a civilian administration.

The fact that the 2025 Gaza peace plan and the current roadmap call for the deployment of an “International Stabilization Force” (ISF) does nothing to change

this. This force is intended solely to monitor compliance with the agreement, not to disarm terrorist organizations. Furthermore, the example of the UN peacekeeping force UNIFIL in Lebanon has shown that such international forces are, in reality, of no use. When it comes down to it, they shy away from taking tough action against terrorists.

In addition, point 8 of the current 15-point declaration, “Disarmament,” refers only to heavy weapons, weapons production facilities, weapons depots, and tunnels, but not to light weapons such as submachine guns, machine guns, or hand grenades.

Although point 6 of the “Roadmap” states that the civil government in Gaza should have the monopoly on the use of force, Point 10 also stipulates that the weapons of the “militias” (the text avoids using the word “terrorists”) are to be stored and monitored by the civilian authorities. However, it leaves open when and how this is to take place.

## Private firearms not ruled out

Above all, however, the current 15-point declaration does not prohibit the possession of personal weapons in Gaza. On the contrary: Point 9 states: “Personal weapons should be governed by the relevant Palestinian laws.” In other words, even members of terrorist organizations may, under certain circumstances, be able to keep their “personal” submachine guns and machine guns. This is entirely in line with Hamas’s previous demands. Hamas had consistently stated that while the surrender of heavy weapons was negotiable, giving up personal weapons was not. This, too, is unacceptable to Israel.

It is therefore highly doubtful whether the “roadmap” for Gaza that has just been presented will ever become a reality.

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Sacha Wigdorovits is president of the Focus on Israel and the Middle East Association, which operates the website [www.fokusisrael.ch](http://www.fokusisrael.ch). He studied history, German language and literature, and social psychology at the University of Zurich and has worked, among other things, as a U.S. correspondent for the *SonntagsZeitung*, served as editor-in-chief of BLICK, and co-founded the commuter newspaper 20minuten.