

Quotes by Israeli security and political figures about the connection between reconstruction and economic development in Gaza and Israel's interests

Details	Quotes
<p>Benny Gantz, then IDF Chief of Staff, Army Radio (Hebrew) August 6, 2014</p>	<p>"The IDF Chief of Staff said today (Tuesday) that the IDF will assist the reconstruction of Gaza after the operation. 'We're now entering a difficult time of assisting the reconstruction', said IDF Chief of Staff Gantz. 'We'll assist in reconstruction not only for strategical reasons, but also because of the humanitarian aspect. We have nothing against the residents of Gaza'. Gantz added that, 'The combination between the necessity to go to war on the one hand and the effort to avoid harm and assisting as much as possible on the other hand is something that is right ethically, instrumentally and strategically'."</p>
<p>Benny Gantz, then IDF Chief of Staff, in an interview in Haaretz October 3, 2014</p>	<p>"Israel, the army chief says, must act wisely with regard to Gaza, which requires 'an economic anchor that will consolidate the military achievements'. Maintaining quiet will also depend on the "carrots" Hamas obtains in the agreement to be negotiated following the hostilities, specifically an easing of economic restrictions in the Gaza Strip... Gantz believes Israel should be vigilant implementing the mechanisms, formulated recently with the United Nations and the Palestinian Authority, that are designed to control the influx of building materials and other goods into Gaza. Some of these could serve Hamas in rebuilding fortifications and rearming itself. In the same breath, though, Gantz adds that 'we have to act rationally. The Strip must be opened to goods – there are 1.8 million people there, stuck between Israel, Egypt and the sea. These people need to live their lives'. The balance, he says, must tilt toward hope over despair, otherwise the fighting could resume – despite Hamas' dire condition'."</p>
<p>Benny Gantz, then IDF Chief of Staff, YNET (Hebrew) October 3, 2014</p>	<p>"Gantz also wishes to remind us of the other side of the equation that is required for maintaining quiet – residents of Gaza: 'The security situation has improved greatly in the south, and there needs to be a balance in the Gaza Strip between the brink of despair and the brink of hope. It's important that we achieve the complementary objectives, there are 1.8 million citizens [sic] there who are blocked on all fronts: air, land, and the sea, and they need to live without being blackmailed, security-wise'."</p>
<p>Benny Gantz, then IDF Chief of Staff, Maariv (Hebrew)</p>	<p>"After all, 1.8 million Palestinians live there and the quiet depends also on the continuation of trend of creating economic hope over there. There are people there who need to live, they're in a space where you have Egypt on one side, us on the other side and the sea up to a</p>

October 3, 2014	<p>distance of six miles on another side. The return of the Palestinian Authority to Gaza is a positive thing in my opinion [...]</p> <p>" Hamas has been hit hard and suffered tremendous damage, so it must see some financial recovery, and this need for economic growth and rehabilitation of the economy is an opportunity and a chance for us' ."</p>
<p>Moshe Ya'alon, then defense minister, in an interview (Hebrew) in <i>Walla!</i> October 15, 2014</p>	<p>" Ya'alon mentions that the operation's objective was to reach a cease-fire under Israeli conditions, and recalled that another objective was that the PA – and not Hamas – will be the one to bring reconstruction to Gaza. ' Will the takeover of Gaza by the PA lead to a significant strategical change? I don't know, but at least it opens the door to some hope. Of course there is a need for releasing the pressure and allowing the Gazans – and not Hamas – to live in dignity. There are 120,000 homeless people in the Gaza Strip following the operation. They have paid a heavy price. They should be allowed to make a living, so part of our interest is to allow those moves' ."</p>
<p>Then COGAT Maj. Gen. Yoav Mordechai, The Marker (Hebrew) and similar quote here in Reuters March 8, 2015</p>	<p>" Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) Maj. Gen. Yoav (Poli) Mordechai said that ' the IDF and defense establishment's policy is to support the reconstruction of Gaza and its economy. The steps that are being taken [allowing the marketing of agricultural goods from Gaza in Israel] are meant to support the Palestinian population and public in the Gaza Strip, while isolating Hamas, which is a terror organization that holds back the Gaza reconstruction process and abuses its resources. The movement of agricultural goods to Israel will be conducted under rigorous and strict enforcement and security checks' ."</p>
<p>" Israel transferred 14,000 tons of construction materials to Gaza," NRG online (Hebrew) April 29, 2015</p>	<p>" The Israeli establishment provided a series of explanations for its policy of expansion towards Gaza. A security official told NRG that just a small fraction of the resources that enter Gaza get into the hands of Hamas. It's in Israel's interest to allow economic activity in Gaza so that unrest doesn't lead to a heating up of the area. The security official also said that Israel's basic understanding is that another round of fighting with Hamas is inevitable, and that the decision to allow in construction materials is a way of delaying it as much as possible."</p>
<p>President Reuven Rivlin, Nana 10 (Hebrew) May 27, 2015</p>	<p>" The reconstruction of Gaza is in our interest and it would be good for us to be willing to accompany some kind of initiative to solve Gaza residents' problems[...] It should be an international effort, on the understanding that reconstruction of Gaza requires a ceasing of hostilities against Israel. I call on the nations of the world, the United States and Europe, to come and see how we are creating a situation of initiative for the improvement of conditions of residents of Gaza."</p>

"1.5 million Palestinians cannot continue living in the current conditions," [Jerusalem Online](#)
May 27, 2015

President of Israel, Reuven Rivlin: "We understand that we must find a solution for the blockage on Gaza; it is an Israeli interest no less than it is a Palestinian interest. Us in Israel realize that there needs to be a solution to the situation in Gaza because 1.5 million Palestinians cannot continue living in the current conditions... We are not blind to the difficulties facing those in Gaza.

"Reconstructing Gaza is an Israeli interest no less than it is a Palestinian interest [...] Our Palestinian neighbors in Gaza are Hamas' hostages, and they deserve a safer and better life. I believe that maintaining Israel's security does not contradict improving life in Gaza. It is clear to all that, a future solution, be as it may, must include the core issues, and that the status quo which formulated before Operation Protective Edge must change."

"Head of research in Military Intelligence says 'Rehabilitation of Gaza is necessary for maintaining quiet,'" [Walla!](#)
(Hebrew)
June 10, 2015

Brigadier General Eli Ben Meir, during a hearing of the Subcommittee for Foreign Affairs and Defense in the Knesset: "Israel is allowing entrance of humanitarian aid for the rehabilitation of residents of Gaza, and is doing all it can to ease the situation. Rehabilitation is the foundation for maintaining long-term quiet'."

"Minister Bennet: 'policy towards Gaza has to be changed,'" [Mako](#)
(Hebrew)
June 27, 2015

Naftali Bennet, former Education Minister: "The civilian rehabilitation of Gaza is in our interest. There are creative solutions for connecting this rehabilitation with the termination of the tunneling activities and empowerment activities [of Hamas]."

Israeli Military Recommends Easing Gaza Border Restrictions, Opening Crossings, [Haaretz](#)
July 8, 2015

"Senior Israel Defense Forces officers recommended to Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon that the opening of border crossings between Israel and the Gaza Strip be expanded [...] A year after the Gaza war, the IDF says that Hamas has been left without real achievements from the fighting and is politically isolated, with its ties with Egypt strained. Precisely for these reasons senior defense officials believe that Israel could help achieve relatively long-term quiet by easing economic restrictions and some limitations on the passage of people and goods from the Gaza Strip."

Former Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon, Radio interview in

"Minister of Defense Ya'alon said that there is no doubt that Hamas is deterred and is dealing with internal challenges in Gaza, and it's actually ISIS actors that are firing rockets periodically in opposition to Hamas. In a visit to Kibbutz Saad, in the Gaza envelope, Ya'alon said

[Reshet Bet](#)
(Hebrew)
September 29,
2015

Member of
Knesset Ofer
Shelah (Yesh
Atid), on his
[Facebook page](#)
(Hebrew)
January 13, 2016

"Military officials:
'there's progress
in the Turkey-
Israel
negotiations,'" [Walla!](#) (Hebrew)
February 21,
2016

"IDF Intelligence
Chief: Despite
 Hamas' Efforts to
Ensure Calm,
Suffering in Gaza
May Lead to
Violence Against
Israel," [Haaretz](#)
February 23,
2016

"Israeli Minister
Backs Plan for
Gaza Island Port,"
[Bloomberg](#)
March 1, 2016

"After 8 years,
Israel to open
Gaza's Erez
Crossing to
commerce," [The](#)

that Israel is trying to use carrots with Hamas, in addition to sticks, and to allow entrance of construction materials for reconstruction or other goods to revive the economy."

"Gaza's economy is worse than it was a year and a half ago. The pressure from Egypt is stifling and the Government of Israel is doing nothing to stave off war. Netanyahu and Ya'alon have taken no initiative. They have not gotten in touch with regional figures who have the means and influence to do what we demanded immediately after Operation Protective Edge happen: an initiative by several countries in the region to demilitarize Gaza, or at least, reduce Hamas' motivation and capability for war, in exchange for a real improvement in residents' lives. Yes, including a seaport."

"Military officials are saying that they support the construction of a Gaza seaport for Hamas, only if the operation will be conducted under clear conditions that will release the financial pressure in the Gaza Strip to prevent a crisis leading to a military campaign with Israel. The military establishment is well aware that unless the energy and water crisis in Gaza are resolved it could blow up in five years, and that it has to be done by building power plants to produce electricity, as a basis for constructing desalination plants. In addition, they understand that the rate of reconstruction of housing in the area isn't going as planned."

Gen. Herzi Halevi, IDF Intelligence Chief: "The Knesset members [...] remarked that Gen. Herzi Halevi said there is certain progress in reconstructing Gaza but that it is too slow and insufficient. [...] He presented data from a UN report that was published in September, according to which if the current trends in Gaza continue, [the Strip] will be uninhabitable by 2020. [...] They said that Halevi made it clear that economic improvement in Gaza will be the most important restraining factor. [...] 'He emphasized to us that if there won't be improvement Israel will be the first to feel it when things explode'."

Yoav Galant, former Construction and Housing Minister: "The biggest danger to Israel is a humanitarian crisis in Gaza. If Gaza had the ability to bring ships, and goods, without posing a security problem, that is in everybody's interest."

Moshe Ya'alon, former Defense Minister: "It is in our interest that a significant number of truckloads of food continue to go to Gaza", a spokesman for Ya'alon said in a statement.

[Times of Israel](#)
May 2, 2016

"It is our interest that Gazans live in dignity. Both from a humanitarian point of view and because this is a way to preserve the peace, in addition to existing security deterrents."

"Kahlon: Rumors of Israel's Regional Diplomatic Breakthrough Are More Than Just Hints to Media,"
[Haaretz](#)
June 2, 2016

Moshe Kahlon, former Finance Minister: "As is known, I am in close and continuous contact with the senior cabinet ministers of the Palestinian Authority. We are making major efforts to strengthen the Palestinian economy. We will continue to strengthen ties between ourselves and the Palestinians and will base them on a healthy economy. Past experience teaches that the seeds that we lay on the economic level also reach the diplomatic and security level."

"Rivlin Tells European Lawmakers: Conditions Not Right for Final Status Agreement With Palestinians,"
[Haaretz](#)
June 22, 2016

President of Israel, Reuven Rivlin: "We need to advance the development of infrastructure, gas, electricity, water, sewage and housing. We need to find a solution to the human tragedy in the Gaza Strip [...] The State of Israel regards the rehabilitation of Gaza, as well as economic development and improved living conditions for both the Palestinians and the Israelis as both a moral and a security interest."

"Israel and Turkey Reach Reconciliation Deal; Formal Announcement Postponed Until Monday,"
[Haaretz](#)
June 26, 2016

A senior Israeli official: "They wanted us to remove the blockade on Gaza, but we categorically rejected that", the senior official said. "But we agreed to help the Gaza population. Our policy is to differentiate between the population and Hamas. There are worrisome signs that the Gaza infrastructure is collapsing. In the end, we are hurt by this, so it's in our interest to deal with Gaza and we want other countries to help".

"Israel and Turkey Officially Announce Rapprochement Deal, Ending Diplomatic Crisis," [Haaretz](#)
June 27, 2016

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu: "Regarding the Gaza closure Netanyahu said that 'the agreement sustains the naval closure which is preventing Hamas from growing stronger. I wouldn't compromise about that'. According to Netanyahu, 'the agreement allows us to deal with the humanitarian issues of Gaza, subject to Israeli security considerations. Improving the water and electricity situation in Gaza is an Israeli interest. The water shortage in Gaza would harm the groundwater in Israel and will contaminate it. When electricity is short, sanitation problems arise that can cause diseases that don't stop at the border. That is why this is a clear Israeli interest'."

"Cabinet did not discuss humanitarian

The comptroller's report notes that the absence of discussion on the various political aspects of the situation in Gaza was particularly noticeable on the backdrop of mounting reports about the

crisis in Gaza,"
[Haaretz](#)
February 28,
2017

Head of Military
Intelligence Herzi
Halevi, [Nana 10](#)
(Hebrew)
March 1, 2017

"' Hamas doesn't
want war, but
the situation in
the Palestinian
Territories is
explosive,'" [The
Jerusalem Post](#)
March 1, 2017

Former
Education
Minister, Naftali
Bennet, [Haaretz](#),
June 12, 2017

Member of
Knesset Eyal Ben-
Reuven (Zionist
Union), [Arutz
Sheva](#), June 13,
2017

deterioration of the humanitarian conditions there, the economic crisis and the collapse of vital infrastructure, including the shortage of water supplies.

Tamar Ish-Shalom: "A day after the publication of the state comptroller's report on Operation Protective Edge, the head of military intelligence reiterates his warning in regards to humanitarian needs in the Gaza Strip..."

Alon Ben David: "The situation today is really similar to (the conditions) before Operation Protective Edge and the processes that resulted in war. Then, like today, the head of military intelligence tells members of Knesset that Gaza is on the brink of a humanitarian crisis. Large areas of the Strip only have electricity supply for three hours a day, hot water is out of the question and the water itself is about to run out. Major Halevy recommends encouraging investment in infrastructure projects in the Strip, and in Judea and Samaria. He warns that the combination between an absence of a diplomatic horizon and poor economic conditions make for an explosive situation."

In regard to the situation in the Palestinian territories, Halevi reportedly said that, absent a diplomatic horizon and due to the lack of economic stability, the situation is explosive. In order to decrease this explosive potential, he added, initiatives must be advanced to improve the Palestinians' economic situation.

"We need to learn from what happened in Gaza in 2014. The humanitarian situation there is deteriorating. We must act to prevent an additional round [of violence] there."

"The government's policy is leading rapidly towards the next confrontation in Gaza," Ben-Reuven said. "The humanitarian situation is extremely difficult, and reducing the amount of electricity transferred to the Gaza Strip, according to the PA's demands, only hurts the 2 million residents of the territory. Instead of trying to balance the humanitarian situation in the region, the government's policy is causing an escalation and bringing the next confrontation to our doorstep. It should be wise, and not always right. There is no reason to run towards the next confrontation [...]" "The right policy is to do everything possible to keep the next confrontation away and try to maintain quiet, as much as possible. Today, the Israeli government is doing the opposite. We are aware of the terrible humanitarian situation in Gaza, and we need to level out the situation there [...]" It's not a matter of responsibility. There

are two million residents in Gaza. We can say that we have no responsibility and there will be two million dead residents there. To my delight, that is not the policy of the Jewish State. The electricity comes from Israel and we are the only ones bringing in food and water. We have no choice, we can't disconnect from Gaza. We have no responsibility for Gaza, and those responsible for Gaza are Hamas [...]. We have a responsibility to ourselves, and it includes an attempt to keep the next confrontation with Gaza away. We understand that part of the matter is the humanitarian issue and we must help, and if that distances the next confrontation, it is in the State of Israel's interest [to do so]."

Member of
Knesset Moti
Yogev (Jewish
Home), [Arutz
Sheva](#) (Hebrew)
June 13, 2017

"If Abu Mazen refuses to pay Gaza's electricity bills, the State of Israel has to find the solution to supply electricity to the Strip and collect payment on its own ... Gaza isn't going anywhere, and neither is Israel. We will continue to deal with security and humanitarian issues, and understand that the thought of disconnecting from Gaza is disconnected from reality."

Gadi Eisenkot,
IDF Chief of Staff,
[Haaretz](#), June 20,
2017

"We have an interest that there will be electricity in the Strip 24 hours-a-day, that there will be clean water and employment. That's an Israeli interest."

Member of
Knesset Avi
Gabbay (Labor),
[Haaretz](#)
(Hebrew) July 9,
2017

"Improving the economic situation of the Palestinians will not turn them into lovers of Israel, but will lead them towards political moderation. Advanced civilian infrastructure, in Gaza too, is in our interest. Today there is willingness in the Arab world and some of the Western countries to implement the "Marshall Plan" of large-scale civilian investments in the territories of the Palestinian Authority, and we have an interest in allowing it."

Member of
Knesset Amir
Peretz (Labor),
[Haaretz](#)
(Hebrew) July 9,
2017

"Regardless of the circumstances, we must do everything to prevent a humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Firstly, because electricity and water are like air for breathing – they must not be denied to anybody. We must provide electricity to the two million residents of Gaza and settle accounts with Hamas without harming these most basic needs. In this case too, this moral imperative matches [our] security interest."

Former
Commander
Southern
Command Maj.
Gen. Sami
Turgeman,
[Channel 2](#)
(Hebrew) July 29,
2017

"To operate well is to reach the right combination between deterrence and readiness for war, and the price of losing, for the people there [in the Strip]. The right combination would make a distinction, as much as possible, between Hamas's military power, and the civilian population in the Gaza Strip. It is completely clear that severe economic hardship creates potential for escalation, potential for a situation where one has nothing to lose any more. We need to sustain the Strip so that it doesn't fall into the abyss."

"[...] If you want to expand the intervals between rounds of fighting, you need to be ready for war, which will deter him [Hamas], and to create hope for the population. Meaning I would open 2 or 3 big crossings, highly advanced ones, around the Gaza Strip, and allow all products into the Strip, on the condition of security checks. Secondly, I would permit people to exit the Strip. Let them exit to the whole world. I would allow the exit of laborers. I think more can be done. I said it after Operation Protective Edge, I think there is no reason why we shouldn't act with the generosity of the victor. We won, and winners should be generous. Now is the time, three years of quiet [...]"

"We need to take into account that Hamas tried to improve the situation through the application of force, and did not succeed. I think it would be wrong if they not succeed also through keeping the quiet, otherwise the message is that we only understand the use of force."

Member of
Knesset Haim
Yelin (Yesh Atid),
[Channel 2](#)
(Hebrew) July 29,
2017

"We see the flow of Gaza's sewage. Viruses don't have borders. Whatever the political decisions made, viruses cross from side to side. Sewage crosses from side to side. The sewage arrives and reaches Zikim beach. The beach was closed. It flowed in the direction of Ashkelon. It's poison. What we see here is flowing sewage that will influence all the citizens here."

"Every time there is a power cut, we remove... reduce the money, and the electricity, and the sewage flows."

"[...] The greater the economic development, the more Hamas's power will decline. The greater the distress, Hamas remains all-powerful in the Gaza Strip."

"We know that we are now in a period of quiet. We have responsibility, as a state, to lead a strategic move. To come and take out between 500 and 5,000 laborers from Gaza, to agriculture, construction and industry. To bring industry here, even if Hamas objects to it, the residents will bring a revolution on their own. The thing to do here is that eventually, there will be economic peace. Not a peace agreement – a ceasefire. And maybe a new generation that will rise up on both sides, and the connection between them will derive from pure economic interest."

Minister of
Transportation
and the Minister
of Intelligence
Israel Katz,

"Every day that passes brings closer either a humanitarian crisis, or a military confrontation, or, sadly, both those things at once."

[Channel 2](#)

(Hebrew) July 29,
2017

Major General
Yoav Mordechai,
former COGAT,
[INSS](#) (Hebrew)
October 2017

"As the situation of Gaza residents worsens, we increase the chances of further violence in this region in the future."

Amos Gilad, [IDF Radio](#) (Hebrew)
January 14, 2018

"The right situation is to increase the amount of humanitarian aid as much as possible there, because the situation (in Gaza) is very difficult. The unemployment is terrible, sewage is on the verge of collapse, water is almost 95 percent contaminated, sewage is flowing in our direction. Diseases- we are made of the same substance. Israel has a clear interest in the humanitarian situation there being more reasonable."

Gadi Eizenkot,
IDF Chief of Staff,
[Maariv](#) (Hebrew)
February 4, 2018

"We must make a significant effort to prevent a humanitarian collapse in the Gaza Strip."

Member of
Knesset Ofer
Shelah (Yesh
Atid), [Maariv](#)
(Hebrew)
February 4, 2018

"The bottom line is clear: The humanitarian collapse in the Gaza Strip has already arrived, and it brings us very close to war, and the prime minister, despite all the warnings, refrains from doing something that will remove this danger."

Lt. Col. (res.)
Michael Sirulnik,
[Haaretz](#)
August 28, 2018

"To talk about an economy in the Gaza Strip nowadays is utopia. It used to be that they would manufacture in Gaza for the Israeli textile and furniture industries, but after 2007 the state wiped out any possibility of economic development. All the Israeli governments implemented a harsh strong-arm policy of starving and harming the Gaza population in order to hurt Hamas, but the reality proves that this simply doesn't help."

Gabi Ashkenazi,
[IDF Radio](#)
(Hebrew)
March 13, 2019

"We have a security interest – and I say this loud and clear – for the living conditions of Gaza residents to be improved."

Maj. Gen. (res.)
Tal Russo, former
GOC Southern
Command,
[Yisrael Hayom](#)
March 29, 2019

“We need to find a solution for them, come up with a plan. You can’t continue this reactive policy of putting out fires. We could make things a lot easier for them ... but you need to be active.”

“Gaza is a pressure cooker that we aren’t finding answers for. On one hand, we need to fight terrorism harder, but on the other, we need to reduce tension among civilians through projects and humanitarian aid that will make things a tiny bit better there.”