

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

Details	Quotes
Benny Gantz, then IDF Chief of Staff, Army Radio (Hebrew) August 6, 2014	<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>
Benny Gantz in an interview in Haaretz October 3, 2014	<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>
Benny Gantz, then IDF Chief of Staff, YNET (Hebrew) October 3, 2014	<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>

Benny Gantz,
 then IDF Chief of
 Staff, [Maariv](#)
 (Hebrew)
 October 3, 2014

“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 distance of six miles on another side. The return of the Palestinian Authority to Gaza is a positive thing in my opinion [...] 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”.

Moshe Ya’alon in
 an [interview](#)
 (Hebrew) in
Walla!
 October 15, 2014

“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”.

COGAT Maj. Gen.
 Yoav Mordechai,
[The Marker](#)
 (Hebrew) and
 similar quote
 here in [Reuters](#)
 March 8, 2015

“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”.

“Israel
 transferred
 14,000 tons of
 construction
 materials to
 Gaza”, [NRG](#)
[online](#) (Hebrew)
 April 29, 2015

“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”.

President Reuven Rivlin, [Nana 10](#) (Hebrew) May 27, 2015

"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".

"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, 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".

Defense Minister
Moshe Ya'alon,
Radio interview
in [Reshet Bet](#)
(Hebrew)
September 29,
2015

"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 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".

M.K. Ofer Shelah
(Yesh Atid), on
his [Facebook
page](#) (Hebrew)
January 13, 2016

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

"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".

<p>"IDF Intelligence Chief: Despite Hamas' Efforts to Ensure Calm, Suffering in Gaza May Lead to Violence Against Israel", Haaretz February 23, 2016</p>	<p>Gen. Herzi Halevi, IDF Intelligence Chief: "The Knesset members [...] remarked that Gen. Herzl 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'".</p>
<p>"Israeli Minister Backs Plan for Gaza Island Port", Bloomberg March 1, 2016</p>	<p>Yoav Galant, 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".</p>
<p>"After 8 years, Israel to open Gaza's Erez Crossing to commerce", The Times of Israel May 2, 2016</p>	<p>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. "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".</p>
<p>"Kahlon: Rumors of Israel's Regional Diplomatic Breakthrough Are More Than Just Hints to Media", Haaretz June 2, 2016</p>	<p>Moshe Kahlon, 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".</p>
<p>"Rivlin Tells European Lawmakers: Conditions Not Right for Final Status Agreement With Palestinians", Haaretz June 22, 2016</p>	<p>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".</p>

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

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

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

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 Halevi 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".

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

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.