

US Conditionally Offers Major Aid to Gaza

U.S. President Donald Trump's Mideast envoys continue efforts to move the peace process between Israel and the Palestinian Authority forward.

Speaking on behalf of the Trump administration, Jared Kushner, the president's son-in-law and senior advisor; Jason Greenblatt, the administration's special representative for international negotiations; and U.S. Ambassador to Israel David Friedman called on Hamas to choose peace instead of terror.

That scenario requires Hamas to renounce terrorism, release two Israelis imprisoned in the Gaza Strip and return the bodies of two IDF soldiers killed in Operation Protective Edge in 2014.

In exchange for meeting those requirements, the U.S. administration is prepared to provide substantial financial aid to help rehabilitate and develop the Gaza coastal enclave.

"International donors are conflicted," Kushner wrote in an article for *The Washington Post*. "Should they try to help the people directly at the certain risk of enriching terrorists or withhold future funding to Hamas and watch the people it is supposed to govern suffer?"

"Until governance changes or Hamas recognizes the state of Israel, abides by previous diplomatic agreements and renounces violence, there is no good option," he wrote.

"Seventy years after the founding of Israel, it would be wise for Hamas to acknowledge that the existence of Israel is a permanent reality," he said. {eo}

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