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Pakistan backs Trump's Gaza 'Board of Peace' — why it's a complicated fit

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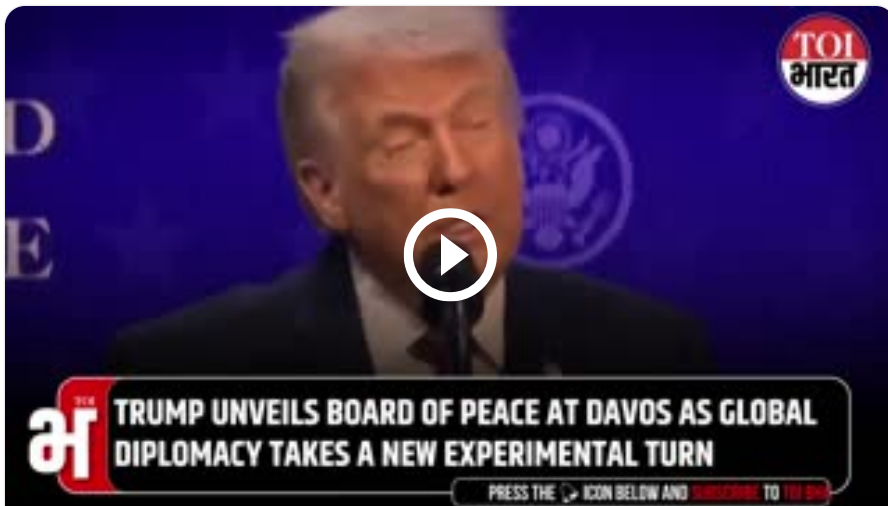
Pakistan

(https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/pakistan) formally backed US President Donald Trump's Gaza "Board of Peace" at Davos, with [Shehbaz Sharif](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/shehbaz-sharif) (https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/shehbaz-sharif) on stage as the initiative was unveiled.

It's a move that places Islamabad closer to a US-led post-war framework for Gaza, even as questions grow over whether political support could evolve into on-ground reality.

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Pakistan's participation contrasted with India's decision to stay off the stage despite receiving an invitation, and with European powers largely opting out of the US-led initiative announced at the World Economic Forum.

'Board of Peace'

Trump's Board of Peace for Gaza, that does not include Palestine, is a mechanism to oversee phase two of his 20-point Gaza roadmap, covering governance, reconstruction, investment, funding mobilisation and regional coordination.

At the core of the plan is an International Stabilisation Force (ISF), mandated to oversee demilitarisation, humanitarian aid delivery and ground-level security, raising the prospect of member states being drawn into operational roles inside Gaza.

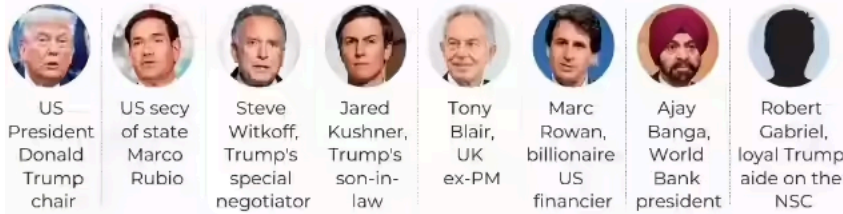
Countries named to the board include Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey, Jordan, the UAE, Bahrain and Morocco, alongside nations from Central Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America.

Around 35 countries have been confirmed from the 50–60 invitations sent, with Western European nations opting out over concerns about the board's structure and mandate.

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\$1BN FOR PERMANENT SEAT ON BOARD

The Trump admin has reached out to various figures around the world to sit on a so-called 'Board of Peace' to oversee governance, reconstruction in Gaza. Member states to have 3-yr terms, and have been told to pay \$1bn for permanent seat. A look at people involved so far:

1 BOARD OF PEACE Body will focus on issues such as 'governance capacity-building, regional relations, reconstruction, investment attraction, large-scale funding and capital mobilisation'



2 NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF GAZA

Made up of technocrats, this body will 'oversee the restoration of core public services, the rebuilding of civil institutions, and the stabilisation of daily life in Gaza'



Ali Shaath, former Palestinian
Authority deputy minister (head of committee)

The US has invited some 60 nations to join his 'Board of Peace' initiative. The US is expected to announce its official list of members in the coming days, likely during the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos

3 **GAZA EXECUTIVE BOARD** This entity is meant to 'support effective governance' and deliver services for the people of Gaza

- Steve Witkoff
- Jared Kushner
- Tony Blair
- Marc Rowan
- Nickolay Mladenov, Bulgarian diplomat
- Sigrid Kaag, UN humanitarian coordinator for Gaza
- Turkish foreign minister Hakan Fidan
- Ali Al-Thawadi, Qatari diplomat
- General Hassan Rashad, director of Egypt's intelligence agency
- Reem Al-Hashimy, Emirati minister
- Yakir Gabay, Israeli billionaire

Islamabad's endorsement

Pakistan confirmed that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif received a formal invitation from Trump to join the Board of Peace and attended the launch in Davos.

"Pakistan will remain engaged with international efforts for peace and security in Gaza, leading to a lasting solution to the Palestine issue in accordance with United Nations resolutions," said foreign office spokesperson Tahir Andrabi.

But the endorsement comes with unresolved questions.

A vote at the UN

In October, the United Nations Security Council adopted a US-authored resolution paving the way for a transitional administration in Gaza and the creation of the ISF. Pakistan, which was presiding over the council, voted in favour.

Yet Islamabad also warned that critical concerns had not been addressed. Pakistan's UN ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmed said the resolution failed to spell out Gaza's governance structure, the role of the proposed Board of Peace, the mandate of the ISF, or the extent of UN authority. "Those are all crucial aspects with a bearing on the success of this endeavour. We earnestly hope that further details in coming weeks will provide the much-needed clarity on these issues," he had said, as quoted by Al Jazeera.

Despite those reservations, Pakistan had already endorsed Trump's Gaza roadmap last year, placing it among the countries most closely aligned with the US approach.

Why Pakistan?

With the largest army among the Muslim-majority states backing the initiative, Pakistan is widely seen as a potential contributor to the ISF.

Islamabad's geopolitical value has risen in recent months, driven by intensified diplomacy with Middle Eastern partners and Washington. Pakistan has signed a strategic defence agreement with Saudi Arabia, expanded military engagement with Jordan and Egypt, and seen army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir cultivate unusually close ties with Trump. It's mostly a part of a broader effort to repair years of strained relations between Washington and Islamabad. In June, Trump hosted Munir for a private lunch at the White House, an unprecedented meeting, marking the first time a US president engaged Pakistan's army chief alone, without any civilian leadership present.

Under constitutional amendments passed by Pakistan's civilian government last month, Munir will retain his field marshal rank for life and enjoy lifetime immunity from criminal prosecution. "Few people in Pakistan enjoy the luxury of taking risks more than Munir. He has unbridled power, now constitutionally protected," said Michael Kugelman, Senior Fellow, South Asia at the Washington-based Atlantic Council.

That positioning strengthens Pakistan's leverage, but also increases expectations.

The domestic minefield

Any prospect of boots on the ground in Gaza carries serious political risks at home.

Palestine is a deeply emotive issue in Pakistan, which does not recognise Israel and explicitly bars travel to it on Pakistani passports. Even indirect coordination with Israeli forces would be politically sensitive and could provoke backlash against both the civilian government and the military.

Any deployment of Pakistani troops to Gaza under a US-backed plan could reignite ~~World~~ ~~Pakistan~~ ~~Times Evoke~~ ~~(https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/World/Times-Evoke)~~ ~~US~~ ~~(https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/World/Us)~~ ~~South A~~ protests by Islamist parties that are fiercely opposed to the US and Israel. These groups have the capacity to mobilise thousands of supporters onto the streets.

Politically, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), led by jailed former prime minister Imran Khan, rejected the government's decision to join the "Board of Peace", saying such moves of international significance must be taken with "full transparency and inclusive consultation".

In a statement, the party said Pakistan's participation in any peace initiative should strengthen the UN's multilateral system, not create "parallel structures" that could weaken global governance. PTI urged the government to "withdraw any formal participation" until a complete consultative process, including parliamentary scrutiny and the involvement of Imran Khan, is carried out, and called for transparent communication with the public through a "referendum". The party also reiterated support for the Palestinian people, saying it would "not accept any plans against the wishes of the people of Palestine".

Separately, Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen chief and Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Allama Raja Nasir Abbas, termed the decision to join Trump's initiative "morally incorrect and indefensible".

Meanwhile, Pakistan faces persistent security challenges on its eastern and western borders, complicating any overseas deployment. It has its own ongoing issues with Afghanistan. For now, Pakistan and Afghanistan agreed in November to uphold a ceasefire during ongoing peace talks in Istanbul, Turkey said, after earlier discussions between the two sides had collapsed, but tensions remain.

The understanding follows the most serious military confrontation between the neighbours since the Taliban's 2021 takeover of Kabul. Deadly clashes earlier this month triggered Pakistani airstrikes, Afghan retaliatory fire and the temporary closure of key border crossings vital for trade and transit.

The economic concerns

Another concern when it comes to Pakistan's involvement in the "Board of Peace" is the lingering economic issues back home.

Trump wants participating nations to pay \$1 billion to remain in good standing with the US and retain a seat on his proposed "Board of Peace", which some have characterised as an alternative to the United Nations, Bloomberg reported, citing a draft charter.

According to the draft, Trump would serve as the board's inaugural chairman and retain sweeping authority over its composition. Member states would be appointed for terms of up to three years from the charter's entry into force, with renewals subject to the chairman's discretion.

"Each Member State shall serve a term of no more than three years from this Charter's entry into force, subject to renewal by the Chairman. The three-year membership term shall not apply to Member States that contribute more than \$1,000,000,000 in cash funds to the Board of Peace within the first year of the Charter's entry into force," the draft says.

This becomes significant considering Pakistan's economy is surviving under severe strain rather than recovering.

Years of weak growth, high inflation, chronic balance-of-payments stress and rising external debt have left it dependent on repeated IMF bailouts and emergency foreign financing. Chinese loans and investment have provided short-term relief but deepened

financial dependence, while tentative re-engagement with the US has offered limited breathing space. Domestic political instability, an outsized military role in governance, entrenched elite privilege and corruption continue to undermine reform. External pressures, from regional security tensions to water disputes, add further risk, leaving Pakistan trapped in a cycle of stabilisation without transformation.

For now, the economy stays afloat through IMF support, administrative controls and geopolitical backstopping, not durable growth.

A complicated diplomacy

By backing Trump's Board of Peace, Pakistan has positioned itself inside a US-led framework shaping Gaza's post-war future. The move enhances its regional relevance and reinforces ties with Washington and Gulf partners.

However, foreign minister Ishaq Dar had said in November that Pakistan could consider contributing troops for peacekeeping, but made clear that disarming Hamas was not Islamabad's responsibility.

But experts have highlighted a different reality. "Not contributing (to the Gaza stabilisation force) could annoy Trump, which is no small matter for a Pakistani state that appears quite keen to remain in his good graces - in great part to secure US investment and security aid," said Kugelman, the Senior Fellow, South Asia at the Washington-based Atlantic Council.

Whether that political endorsement translates into stabilisation forces on the ground, and whether Pakistan can absorb the domestic and strategic costs of such a step, remains the unanswered question hanging over Islamabad's Gaza calculus.



- What role is Pakistan expected to play in the Gaza stabilisation force according to the story? ▼
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