



AFRICAN NARRATIVES

Somaliland, Puntland, and Morocco: Examining the Feasibility of US Gaza Displacement Proposals



Author:

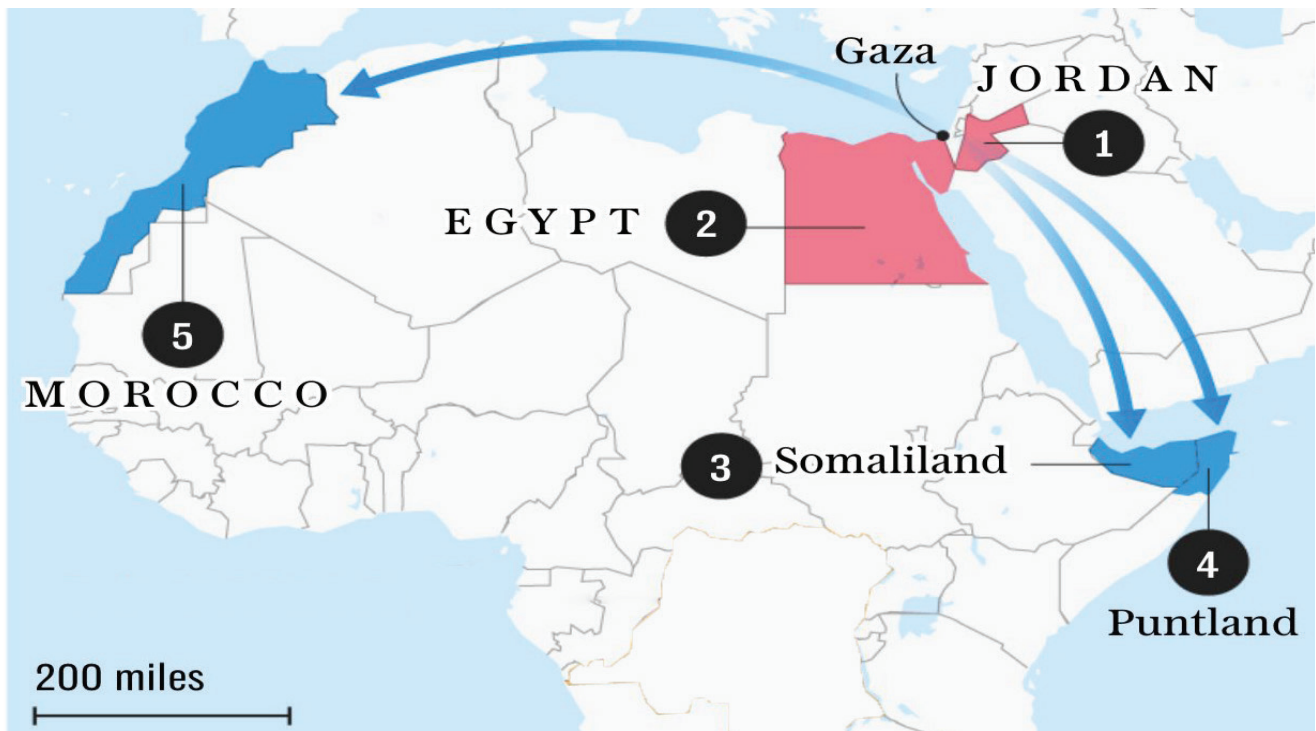


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Summary of the study

This study examines US President Donald Trump’s proposal to displace residents of the Gaza Strip to various countries, including Egypt, Jordan, Somaliland, Puntland, and Morocco. This plan was presented as part of an initiative to redevelop Gaza into a tourist destination. However, the proposal faced widespread condemnation from Arab nations and the international community, who viewed it as an attempt to dismantle the Palestinian cause and reshape the region’s demographic and political landscape. Following the escalation of violence in Gaza after Operation “Noah’s Flood,” speculation regarding the implementation of these proposals increased, despite the significant obstacles they face.

The study explores the evolving relationship between the United States and Somaliland, noting Washington’s growing interest in strengthening ties with the region despite its lack of official recognition. This interest stems from US strategic interests in the Horn of Africa, particularly amid increasing international competition. The possibil-

ity of relocating the US military base from Djibouti to Somaliland has also been discussed, citing its strategic location and potential role in supporting US military operations in Africa. While such a move could present opportunities, it also faces challenges related to security, infrastructure, and political stability in the region.

Regarding the potential displacement of Gaza residents to Somaliland, the study highlights the numerous challenges associated with such a plan. These include the staunch Arab rejection of any attempts to displace Palestinians, the determination of Gaza residents to remain in their homeland, and Somaliland’s own struggles with weak infrastructure, security concerns, and potential public opposition to receiving a large influx of refugees. Ultimately, the study concludes that implementing this displacement plan is unrealistic. Instead, it advocates for focusing on rebuilding Gaza and pursuing political solutions that guarantee the rights of the Palestinian people and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.



The main points

- Trump's proposal to displace Gaza residents to countries including Somaliland and Puntland regions.
- Widespread Arab and international rejection of the plan, viewed as a form of ethnic cleansing.
- The relationship between the United States and Somaliland and its role in US strategy in the Horn of Africa.
- The proposal to relocate the US military base from Djibouti to Somaliland and associated challenges.
- Challenges to displacing Gaza residents to Somaliland, including Arab rejection, weak infrastructure, and security concerns.
- The unfeasibility of implementing Trump's proposals to displace Gaza residents to Somaliland, Puntland, or Morocco.
- The need to prioritize rebuilding Gaza as a sustainable solution to the crisis.





Introduction

The concept of deporting Gazans involves relocating them to an alternative homeland and expanding Israel's geographic reach. In this context, media reports indicated that Trump considered options to move Palestinians to areas such as Morocco, Somaliland, and Puntland in Africa.

These proposals were widely rejected by Arab countries and the international community, as they were considered a form of ethnic cleansing and a threat to the stability of the region. The Somali government also rejected the idea of set-

ling Palestinians on its lands, stressing that it would not be part of any policy of displacement of Palestinians. This plan raises serious questions about the rights and future of Palestinians and is a continuation of policies aimed at reshaping the demographic and political reality in the region. Hence, this report addresses the history and development of the "alternative homeland" concept, Trump's proposals to displace the people of Gaza, and the extent to which the people of Gaza could be transferred to Africa, specifically to Somaliland, Puntland, and Morocco.



An alternative homeland for the Palestinian people

The Arab-Israeli conflict primarily revolves around two key elements: land and people. Israel's success hinges on its ability to control the land and displace its population. Conversely, the steadfastness and success of the Palestinian national project are measured by the Palestinian people's resilience on their land and the establishment of their political and national identity. Since the conflict's inception, Israel has strived to seize Palestinian land, uproot its inhabitants, and displace them through various methods. The Palestinian people, however, have remained steadfast despite the pressures.

In the post-Nakba period, the greatest threat to the Palestinian people and their cause was the risk of integration, settlement, assimilation, and the obliteration of their national identity. This involved uprooting the Palestinian people from their geographic region, preventing their political presence, and reducing the Palestinian cause to a refugee issue. The Palestinians focused their struggle on crystallizing a political entity for the Palestinian people and securing international recognition, primarily through armed resistance⁽¹⁾.

For decades, Israel refused to recognize the existence of a distinct "Palestinian people," treating them as mere population blocs. This stance shifted following radical political changes in the 1990s, which led Israel to reassess its strategies, along with the Palestinian strategy. These changes culminated in the Oslo Accords⁽²⁾.

However, Israeli strategy continued to seek alternatives that would lead to the expulsion of the Palestinian people and the resolution of the conflict without withdrawing from the occupied territories. The "alternative homeland" project represents one of the most prominent of these alternatives.

Following the Al-Aqsa Flood Movement on October 7, 2023, and the ensuing events and Israeli actions in Gaza, discussions emerged between the United States and Israel regarding the potential displacement of Gaza residents to Egypt and Jordan. When these proposals met with Arab rejection, the United States expanded its list of potential destinations to include Somaliland, Puntland regions in Somalia, and Morocco in Africa.

US-Somaliland relations and the transfer of the military base

On June 9, 2022, the US Senate passed a security partnership law with Somaliland, a region that unilaterally declared independence from Somalia in 1991 but has not yet received international recognition. This partnership reflects Washington's strategic interests in the region, including countering Chinese expansion, and signifies the evolving relationship between Washington and Hargeisa. Somaliland is located in northern Somalia and is not officially recognized by any country except Taiwan, which is organically linked to the United States. I (Somaliland is one of the few countries in the world that has close relations with Taiwan, and China has responded by deepening its relations with Somalia, including upgrading their relations to a "strategic partnership" and sending aid), Somaliland officials view Perry's draft resolution as a belated recognition of their successes and a potential turning point for their international standing.

In any case, the draft resolution comes at a time of heightened geopolitical competition in the Horn of Africa. China and Russia have deepened their regional engagement through infrastructure deals and military partnerships in this region and the Sahel and Sahara, especially with the Central African Republic, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. Russia has

1 "محمد أبو رمان، الأردن والضفة الغربية... وجدل "الوطن البديل"
، Mukarbat For Political Development، <https://mukarbat.org/archives/4672>

2 Palestinians will not accept resettlement plans, alternative homeland: Presidency, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/palestinians-will-not-accept-resettlement-plans-alternative-homeland-presidency/3470269>

also turned to Sudan, where a Russian naval base is currently being established in Port Sudan on the Red Sea. Although Russia has played a limited role in Somalia so far, it could grow steadily if the United States decides to recognize the so-called Republic of Somaliland. Russia Recently, it offered military support to Mogadishu against the extremists of the Al-Shabaab movement⁽³⁾.

The United States has also supported Somaliland's relations with Taiwan, with the US National Security Council praising the relationship between the two sides, and the US ambassador to Somalia has visited Hargeisa twice to strengthen relations with the leadership in Somaliland.

Despite these developments, the United States has not yet officially recognized the independence of Somaliland. However, there are indications that the US administration may re-evaluate its policy towards Somaliland, especially in light of the geopolitical competition in the Horn of Africa region. The United States seeks to strengthen its relations with Somaliland, taking into account the regional and international balances in the region.

In the context of the United States' desire to consolidate its relationship with Somaliland, proposals have emerged to transfer the US military base from Djibouti to Somaliland.

Djibouti is a small country consisting of one city with a little over a million people in the Horn of Africa, and it is an independent country with a majority of Somali origin. Djibouti has been designated as a strategic partner by Pentagon planners. The port of Djibouti has been a vital resupply point for the U.S. Navy fleet patrolling the Gulf of Aden since 9/11⁽⁴⁾.

Djibouti is home to a U.S. military base, the only permanent U.S. military base in Africa, and is used for counterterrorism operations, particularly against al-Shabaab in Somalia. The port in Djibouti is overflowing with commercial activity and no longer meets U.S. maritime security protocols for large carriers. Pentagon planners see the military base in Berbera, Somalia, as a critical location to support rapidly expanding military operations in the Horn of Africa. The United States is constantly pressuring Somaliland, using the international recognition card to accept the displacement of Gazans to its territory.

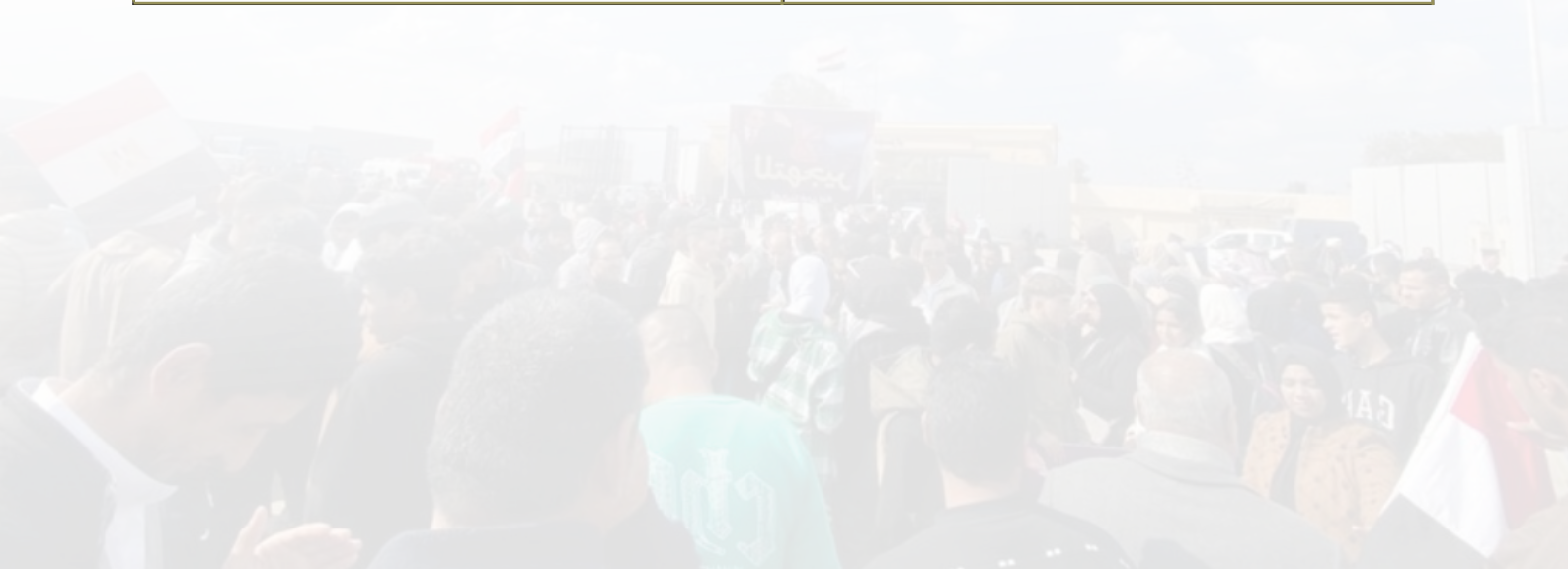
Building upon the previous analysis, it is possible to outline the key opportunities and challenges associated with transferring the American military base from Djibouti to Somaliland.

3 بلال المصري، الإعتراف الأمريكي المرتقب بصوماليلاند مآربه ونتائج، المركز الديمقراطي العربي، المحتملة علي القرن الأفريقي والشرق الأوسط، <https://democraticac.de/?p=101754>

4 أرض الصومال تخطط لمنح قاعدة عسكرية للولايات المتحدة في "بربرة"، قراءات افريقية <https://qiraatafrican.com/25888/%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%B6-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B5%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%AA%D8%AE%D8%B7%D8%B7-%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D8%AD-%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%B9%D8%B3%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%84%D9%88/>

Opportunities and Challenges of Relocating the US Military Base from Djibouti to Somaliland

Opportunities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Operational Proximity: Establishing a base within Somalia (specifically Somaliland) could streamline military and intelligence operations targeting terrorist groups. Reduced response times and enhanced mission effectiveness would be key advantages.• Enhanced Local Stability: A direct U.S. military presence could bolster stabilization efforts and contribute to building the security capabilities of Somali forces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Security: The fragile security situation in Somalia, with persistent threats from al-Shabaab and other militant groups, could expose U.S. forces to increased risk.• Infrastructure: Somalia may lack the necessary infrastructure to support a large military base, potentially requiring significant investments in construction and logistics.• Political Stability: A U.S. military presence could create political friction with the Somali government and local actors, particularly in regions seeking international recognition, such as Somaliland.• Regional Tensions: Moving the base could strain relations with neighboring countries that currently host U.S. military bases, such as Djibouti and Kenya, as these nations might perceive the move as diminishing their strategic importance to the U.S.





Potential for Displacing Gaza Residents to Somaliland

In this context, it is essential to distinguish between Somalia and Somaliland. The latter was under British protection until 1960, operating as a dependent territory under limited British jurisdiction. Following a brief five-day period of independence, it merged with present-day Somalia, which was then under Italian rule. This union marked the beginning of a protracted and often violent conflict.

During the 1980s, the Somali National Movement (SNM), a rebel group, emerged in Somaliland. In 1991, following the overthrow of military dictator Siad Barre, whose forces had perpetrated widespread killings during the civil war based on ethnic and tribal lines, the SNM declared Somaliland's independence. Hargeisa was designated as the capital, although international recognition remains elusive. Over the subsequent decade, the SNM drafted a new constitution for Somaliland, which was approved in a 2001 referendum. Consequently, the pursuit of international recognition has become a key point of leverage for the United States to implement its plans and achieve its strategic objectives in the Horn of Africa region⁽⁵⁾.

Since US President Donald Trump declared the intention to explore displacing the residents of Gaza, analyses and assessments have emerged examining the feasibility of such a plan on the ground. In the researcher's assessment, the most significant challenges hindering the displacement of Gaza residents to Somaliland are as follows:

- **Arab Rejection:** The proposal to displace Gaza residents faces strong opposition from Arab nations. Implementing such a plan would be seen as abandoning the Palestinian cause, undermining the Arab demand for legitimate rights, including the establishment of a Palestinian state, and halting Israeli settlement expansion.
- **Rejection by the People of Gaza:** The population of Gaza has rejected the displacement plan, reaffirming their national identity, their desire to remain in their homeland, and their commitment to rebuilding it, regardless of the cost.
- **Somaliland Government Position:** The Somaliland government has yet to issue a clear official position on the displacement proposal. While some analysts suggest that Somaliland may be interested in securing international recognition, it is likely aware of the complexities associated with accepting a large influx of Palestinian refugees.
- **Somaliland's Capacity and Social Dynamics:** Somaliland faces significant challenges in providing the necessary infrastructure and basic services to accommodate a large number of new residents, given its limited resources. The influx of a large refugee population could potentially lead to social and security tensions, especially considering the existing security challenges within the region. Furthermore, this proposal may be met with resistance from local Somaliland residents, who could perceive it as a threat to their cultural identity.

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<https://aawsat.com/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A/5109470-%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%B6-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B5%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%-84-%D9%87%D9%84-%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%A8%D9%84-%D8-AA%D9%87%D8-AC%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A%D9%8A%D9%86-%>



Potential for Displacing Gaza Residents to Puntland

About Puntland

Puntland is a semi-autonomous region in north-eastern Somalia, which declared its independence in 1998, but is still legally part of Somalia. It has a relatively stable government compared to the rest of Somalia, but faces security, economic, and political challenges. Challenges facing the displacement of the people of Gaza to Puntland⁽⁶⁾.

Official Political Rejection

- Officials within the Puntland government have publicly rejected the notion of receiving Palestinian refugees.
- The Puntland government has issued statements affirming its support for the rights of Palestinians to live in their homeland and explicitly refusing to participate in any plan to resettle them in Somalia⁽⁷⁾.

Economic Constraints

- Puntland suffers from weak infrastructure and lacks the economic capacity to accommodate hundreds of thousands of refugees.

- Its economy relies heavily on livestock and remittances from expatriates, rendering it unable to provide basic services such as housing, healthcare, and education to a large refugee population.

Security Challenges

- Despite its relative stability compared to other parts of Somalia, Puntland continues to face security threats from groups such as Al-Shabaab and IS, making it an unsafe environment for receiving refugees.
- The presence of a large number of Palestinian refugees could exacerbate political tensions within the region, particularly given the scarcity of resources⁽⁸⁾.

Local Population Position

- Residents of Puntland strongly oppose the idea of receiving Palestinian refugees, citing concerns about potential demographic changes, fearing that Palestinians, who have high levels of education, could dominate the economy and politics⁽⁹⁾.

6 أرض البنط والريفيرا مناطق تدور في فلك جغرافيا ترامب حول مخططة لغزة
<https://www.bbc.com/arabic/articles/cde95117jplp>، بي بي سي

7 Mohamed Samir, "Sick Joke": Trump's Idea to Resettle Palestinians in Puntland, Somaliland, Morocco Faces Widespread Rejection, <https://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2025/02/11/sick-joke-trumps-idea-to-resettle-palestinians-in-puntland-somaliland-morocco-faces-widespread-rejection/>

8 قوات بونتلاند تنتزع مناطق واسعة من تنظيم الدولة بالصومال، الجزيرة
<https://www.ajnet.me/news/2025/2/7/%D9%82%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A8%D9%88%D9%86%D8%AA%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AF-%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%B2%D8%B9-%D9%85%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B7%D9%82-%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D9%85%D9%86>

9 Mohamed Samir, "Sick Joke": Trump's Idea to Resettle Palestinians in Puntland, Somaliland, Morocco Faces Widespread Rejection, <https://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2025/02/11/sick-joke-trumps-idea-to-resettle-palestinians-in-puntland-somaliland-morocco-faces-widespread-rejection/>

Potential for Displacing the Population of Gaza to Morocco

About Morocco

Morocco is an Arab nation situated in North Africa. It enjoys relative political stability and a robust economy compared to many countries in the region. However, the issue of Western Sahara remains a contentious point in Moroccan politics, with Morocco seeking to solidify its sovereignty over the territory despite international opposition.

Challenges Facing the Displacement of the Population of Gaza to Morocco

Official Political Position

- Morocco has categorically rejected the idea of displacing Palestinians to its territory. On February 8, 2025, the Kingdom of Morocco announced its rejection and condemnation of calls for the displacement of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, deeming such actions a “dangerous precedent that threatens the security and stability of the region⁽¹⁰⁾.”
- Moroccan authorities have affirmed their commitment to the unified Arab and Islamic position, which rejects any plan aimed at emptying Palestine of its population.

Popular Sentiment

- The Moroccan people have demonstrated widespread opposition to the idea of displacement, with large-scale demonstrations taking place in support of Palestine and against any form of normalisation with Israel.
- Moroccans view the acceptance of Palestinian refugees as an implicit endorsement of Israeli displacement plans, a position that is strongly rejected by Moroccan public opinion⁽¹¹⁾.

Economic Conditions

- While Morocco possesses a more developed economy than Puntland and Somalia, enabling it to demonstrate resilience even in the face of global economic challenges (as highlighted by a 3.4% rise in real output in 2023,⁽¹²⁾ according to the World Bank), the Moroccan economy still faces considerable challenges. These include the struggles of companies and households to recover from recent shocks, evidenced by rising corporate insolvency, and the labour market's loss of 200,000 jobs in rural areas in 2023⁽¹³⁾.

Consequently, the influx of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees could strain economic resources and infrastructure, placing additional burdens on the state and potentially creating new social challenges.

Challenges Related to Identity and Culture

- While Palestinians and Moroccans share a common religion and language, cultural and social differences could complicate integration. Furthermore, certain Palestinian factions reject the idea of displacement to Morocco, or any other country, viewing it as a concession to the Palestinian cause⁽¹⁴⁾. The researcher's analysis of expert opinions suggests that, while Morocco aims to play a mediating role in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, it does not wish to participate in any project that seeks to alter the demographic composition of Palestine. Although the Kingdom of Morocco maintains diplomatic relations with Israel, this does not imply support for plans involving forced displacement.

10 المغرب والعراق: تهجير الفلسطينيين سابقة خطيرة، الجزيرة
<https://www.ajnet.me/news/2025/2/8/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%BA%D8%B1%D8%A8-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%82-%D8%AA%D9%87%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A%D9%8A%D9%86>

11 «موقف رسمي من المغرب بعد جدل "نقل سكان غزة"، الحرة
<https://www.alhurra.com/morocco/2025/02/09/%D9%85%D9%88%D9%82%D9%81-%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%85%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%BA%D8%B1%D8%A8-%D8%AC%D8%AF%D9%84-%D9%86%D9%82%D9%84-%D8%B3%D9%83%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%BA%D8%B2%D8%A9>

12 الاقتصاد المغربي يثبت قدرته على الصمود لكن القطاع الخاص يواجه تحديات، مجموعة البنك الدولي

<https://www.albankaldawli.org/ar/news/press-release/2024/07/18/morocco-s-economy-proves-resilient-but-private-sector-faces-challenges>

13 مسار المغرب الطويل نحو التحول الاقتصادي، مؤسسة كارنيغي
<https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/09/morocco-long-road-toward-economic-transformation?lang=ar¢er=middle-east>

14 Mohamed Samir, "Sick Joke": Trump's Idea to Resettle Palestinians in Puntland, Somaliland, Morocco Faces Widespread Rejection, <https://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2025/02/11/sick-joke-trumps-idea-to-resettle-palestinians-in-puntland-somaliland-morocco-faces-widespread-rejection/>



Conclusion:

Despite the forceful statements made by US President Donald Trump and his insistence on implementing a plan to displace the residents of Gaza, this proposal remains fraught with numerous challenges and obstacles. These include the Palestinian people's rejection of the plan, the widespread Arab consensus against displacement in favour of establishing a Palestinian state, and the prioritisation of policies aimed at rebuilding Gaza with the support of the international community.