

MIDDLE EAST

A fake pro-Israel humanitarian NGO "helps" Palestinians leave Gaza

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After 77 years, history is repeating itself. In 1948, over 700,000 Palestinians fled their homeland to seek refuge in neighbouring countries, both before and after the conflict between Israel and the Arab states. The war was won by the army bearing the Star of

David. But before leaving their homes, the refugees locked the door. They kept the keys, believing the promises that they would be allowed to return. This never happened. Those keys still hang in their new homes as a reminder of the Nakba ('catastrophe'), the forced exodus of the last century.

In contrast, the inhabitants of Gaza do not carry their keys with them, as their homes were destroyed during two years of fierce fighting. They leave the Strip for an unknown destination after paying between £1,500 and £2,000 to an organisation called Al-Majd Europe, which is shrouded in mystery. Founded in 2010, the organisation claims to be dedicated to "providing aid and relief operations to Muslim communities in areas of conflict and war", according to its website. But this is not quite the case. Some investigations suggest that the website has only been operational for a few months. Strangely, there are no telephone or email contact details, and the details provided do not exist. Even the reported location is incorrect. In fact, there is no trace of this elusive organisation in Sheikh Jarrah, occupied East Jerusalem, and no one knows anything about it.

One thing, however, is certain: Palestinians who are 'persuaded to leave Gaza voluntarily' depart from Ramon Airport in the Negev Desert, north of Eilat. This is naturally after receiving authorisation from the Israeli army. They leave Gaza via the Kerem Shalom crossing by bus, encountering no obstacles, after paying for a one-way ticket. An Israeli agent oversees the transfer, overseeing the so-called 'journey of hope'. The last trip reportedly had 153 passengers, all of whom had agreed to leave Gaza in exchange for vague promises. Those who refused to leave the Strip wonder where the money to pay for the flight came from and where they are ultimately headed. It appears to be South Africa. Indeed, a plane that took off from Israel and came from Kenya landed at OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg with over 150 Gazans on board who had no documents. Initially, the South African authorities did not allow the passengers to disembark because they had no documents or luggage, but they were then granted a temporary 90-day visa.

The Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has urged the people of the West Bank, especially those in Gaza, to be wary of such humanitarian organisations, which are actually controlled by the Israeli government. The Office for Voluntary Emigration, which was created by the Israeli Ministry of Defence to encourage emigration from the Strip, commissioned Al-Majd Europe to plan the departures from Gaza. This operation was carried out in conjunction with COGAT, the Israeli army body responsible for coordinating government activities in the territories. Al-Majd Europe is

headed by Tomer Janar Lind, an Estonian citizen of Jewish origin who works with the aforementioned office.

But this is not the only trip. According to Israeli sources, in October last year, another plane landed in South Africa carrying 170 Palestinians, and another flight was organised for 27 May. On that occasion, 57 Palestinians were transferred from Gaza to Israel, and then on to Indonesia and Malaysia — both of which are Muslim-majority countries. This contrasts with the 'peace plan' proposed by US President Donald Trump, which is currently being discussed by the United Nations Security Council. The resolution, which was approved despite abstentions from China and Russia, gives a mandate until 31 December 2027 to a 'peace committee', i.e. a transitional body, pending the involvement of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in the administration. Trump will chair the committee. This new body will have an international stabilisation force (ISF) at its disposal, tasked with ensuring the security of the borders of Israel and Egypt, demilitarising Gaza, disarming non-state armed groups, protecting civilians, and training a Palestinian police force. However, the text does not provide details on the composition of the ISF. Hamas says that the UN Security Council resolution supporting Trump's plan for Gaza does not meet the political and humanitarian demands of the Palestinians.

The UN also discussed the self-determination of the future State of Palestine.

This issue was strongly contested by Israel's representative and the far-right allies of Netanyahu's government. Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich has in fact levelled heavy criticism at Netanyahu, accusing him of 'silence and diplomatic shame' regarding the creation of the State of Palestine. Smotrich argues that the prime minister has failed to respond adequately to the recent unilateral recognition of a Palestinian state by several countries. National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir joined the protest, declaring that there is no such thing as a 'Palestinian people'. He even called for the assassination of Palestinian National Authority officials if the UN Security Council definitively approves the US peace proposal and recognises the State of Palestine.

Notably, the use of hate speech against Palestinians by some members of Netanyahu's government is causing widespread aversion, contempt and hostility towards the Israeli people, not only in the Middle East.