

July, 2025

Congress & the White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Re: The 2nd Treaty of Lausanne
Proposal to Recognize and Repatriate Gazans as Ottoman Nationals

Mr. Speaker and Mr. President,

I write to respectfully urge our Government to support a bold and historically grounded humanitarian initiative: the recognition and repatriation of the population of Gaza as rightful descendants of Ottoman subjects, entitled to full citizenship and resettlement under Turkish jurisdiction—either within the Republic of Turkey or in Turkish-administered regions of northern Syria, both regions with ample undeveloped land.

This proposal is rooted in an overlooked truth: that the vast majority of the current population of Gaza are stateless by historical default and represent a displaced remnant of the Ottoman Empire, forcibly cut off from their national and legal identities by the disintegration of the empire and subsequent British and French mandates. As this administration and Congress seeks enduring solutions to seemingly intractable crises, this path offers not merely relief but an implementable, peaceful and enduring resolution.

1. Historical Foundation: Tanzimat and Ottoman Citizenship

During the 19th century, under the Tanzimat reforms, the Ottoman Empire launched ambitious efforts to stabilize and repopulate Eretz Yisrael. Observers of the time, including American writer Mark Twain, documented the results of these reforms with vivid candor.

During his 1867 visit, Twain described the Holy Land as “a desolate country whose soil is rich enough but is given over wholly to weeds—a silent mournful expanse,” and noted that towns such as Tiberias and Nazareth were lifeless and sparsely populated.

His observations underscored the Ottoman state’s urgent need to repopulate and rejuvenate the Levant, goals which the Tanzimat sought to fulfill through these targeted incentives. These included incentives such as tax relief, land grants, and citizenship rights to attract Muslim populations—many of whom settled in the coastal plain of Israel including Gaza. The 1869 Ottoman Nationality Law granted legal status and rights to these Turkish, Syrian and Lebanese settlers, entrenching a citizenship framework that embraced all ethnic and religious groups born or naturalized within the Ottoman Levant.

2. The Legal Continuity of Ottoman Descent

The descendants of these legally recognized Ottoman citizens have never been stripped of that identity by any lawful successor. On the contrary, the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, while ceding

former Arab provinces to European mandates, did not abrogate the citizenship lineage of those who remained within former Ottoman borders. Many of today's Gazans trace their family histories to internal Ottoman migrations from Anatolia, Syria, and the Levantine coast during the 1800s, incentivized by the very repopulation campaigns sponsored by the Ottoman state.

3. Proposal for a Second Treaty of Lausanne

We propose that the United States encourage the convening of an international conference to negotiate a "Second Treaty of Lausanne." This accord would:

- Recognize Gazans of Ottoman descent as eligible for repatriation and citizenship in Turkey or in Turkish-administered regions of Syria;
- Establish voluntary resettlement zones in Southeastern Turkey (e.g., Şanlıurfa, Hatay, Gaziantep) and northern Syria (e.g., Afrin, Raqqah), where Turkey already provides governance;
- Create an international trust to fund infrastructure, security, housing, and education in these new cantons;
- Offer Turkey diplomatic and economic incentives for absorbing the Gazan population, similar to the Greek-Turkish population exchange framework of the 1923 treaty.

4. Geopolitical Benefits

Such a framework would significantly reduce pressure on Israel, Gaza, and Egypt, stabilize southeastern Turkey and northern Syria through managed development, and undercut the leverage of radical actors who thrive on statelessness and despair. It would also present the United States as a peacemaker capable of resolving one of the longest-running refugee crises in modern history, aligning with both American values and interests.

5. Urgency and Implementation

We respectfully request that this Administration and Congress jointly issue a statement in support of the "2nd Treaty of Lausanne" and the appointment of a U.S. Special Envoy to coordinate with appropriate bodies. Time is of the essence. Every year lost deepens radicalization, generational trauma, and regional instability.

Mr. President and Speaker, the people of Gaza deserve more than containment. They deserve restoration. We urge you to lead the world in affirming their rightful identity and forging a new path toward lasting peace.

Respectfully submitted,

[Your Full Name]

[Your Title or Organization, if applicable]

[Contact Information]

[Date]