

The Gaza Ceasefire Charade. Chris Hedges

By [Chris Hedges](#)

Global Research, January 17, 2025

[The Chris Hedges Report](#) 16 January 2025

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [History](#), [Intelligence](#)

In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

Israel plays a cynical game. It makes phased agreements with the Palestinians that ensure it immediately gets what it wants. It then violates every subsequent phase and reignites its military assault.

*

Israel, going back decades, has played a duplicitous game. It [signs](#) a deal with the Palestinians that is to be implemented in phases. **The first phase gives Israel what it wants — in this case the release of the Israeli hostages in Gaza — but Israel [habitually fails](#) to implement subsequent phases that would lead to a just and equitable peace.** It eventually provokes the Palestinians with indiscriminate armed assaults to retaliate, defines a Palestinian response as a provocation and abrogates the ceasefire deal to reignite the slaughter.

If this latest three-phase ceasefire deal is ratified — and there is [no certainty](#) that it will be by Israel — it will, I expect, be little more than a presidential inauguration bombing pause. Israel has no intention of halting its merry-go-round of death.

The Israeli cabinet has [delayed](#) a vote on the ceasefire proposal while it continues to pound Gaza. At least 81 Palestinians have been [killed](#) in the last 24 hours.

The morning after a ceasefire agreement was announced, Israeli **Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu** [accused](#) Hamas of reneging on part of the deal “in an effort to extort last minute concessions.” He warned that his cabinet will not meet “until the mediators notify Israel that Hamas has accepted all elements of the agreement.”

Hamas [dismissed](#) Netanyahu’s claims and repeated their commitment to the ceasefire as agreed with the mediators.

The deal includes three phases. The first phase, lasting 42 days, will see a cessation of hostilities. Hamas will release some Israeli hostages – 33 Israelis who were captured on Oct. 7, 2023, including all of the remaining five women, those aged above 50, and those with illnesses – in exchange for up to 1,000 Palestinians imprisoned by Israel.

The Israeli army will pull back from the populated areas of the Gaza Strip on the first day of the ceasefire. On the 7th day, displaced Palestinians will be permitted to return to northern Gaza. Israel will allow 600 aid trucks with food and medical supplies to enter Gaza daily.

The second phase, which begins on the 16th day of the ceasefire, will see the release of the remaining Israeli hostages. Israel will complete its withdrawal from Gaza during the second phase, maintaining a presence in some parts of the Philadelphi corridor, which stretches

along the eight-mile border between Gaza and Egypt. It will surrender its control of the Rafah border crossing into Egypt.

The third phase will see negotiations for a permanent end of the war.

But it is Netanyahu's office that appears to have already reneged on the agreement. It released a [statement](#) rejecting Israeli troop withdrawal from the [Philadelphi Corridor](#) during the first 42-day phase of the ceasefire. "In practical terms, Israel will remain in the Philadelphi Corridor until further notice," while claiming the Palestinians are attempting to violate the agreement. Palestinians throughout the numerous ceasefire negotiations have demanded Israeli troops withdraw from Gaza. Egypt has [condemned](#) the seizure of its border crossings by Israel.



The Philadelphi Route separates Egyptian Sinai from the Gaza Strip, stretching north-northwest from Kerem Shalom to the Mediterranean Sea (Licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0)

The deep fissures between Israel and Hamas, even if the Israelis finally accept the agreement, threaten to implode it. Hamas is seeking a permanent ceasefire. But Israeli policy is unequivocal about its “right” to re-engage militarily. There is no consensus about who will govern Gaza. Israel has made it clear the continuance of Hamas in power is unacceptable. There is no mention of the status of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the U.N. agency that Israel has

[outlawed](#) and that provides the bulk of the humanitarian aid given to the Palestinians, 95 percent of whom have been displaced. There is no agreement on the reconstruction of Gaza, which lies in rubble. And, of course, there is no route in the agreement to an independent and sovereign Palestinian state.

Israeli mendacity and manipulation is pitifully predictable.

The Camp David Accords, signed in 1979 by Egyptian president **Anwar Sadat** and Israeli prime minister **Menachem Begin**, without the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), normalized diplomatic relations between Israel and Egypt. But the subsequent phases, which included a promise by Israel to resolve the Palestinian question along with Jordan and Egypt, permit Palestinian self-governance in the West Bank and Gaza within five years, and end the building of Israeli colonies in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, were [never honored](#).



Anwar Sadat, Jimmy Carter and Menachem Begin (left to right), at Camp David, 1978 (From the Public Domain)

Or take the 1993 Oslo Accords. The agreement, [signed](#) in 1993, which saw the PLO recognize Israel's right to exist and Israel recognize the PLO as the legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people, and Oslo II, signed in 1995, which detailed the process towards peace and a Palestinian state, was stillborn. It stipulated that any discussion of illegal Jewish "settlements" was to be delayed until "final" status talks, by which time Israeli military withdrawals from the occupied West Bank were to have been completed. Governing authority was to be [transferred](#) from Israel to the supposedly temporary Palestinian Authority. The West Bank was carved up into Areas A, B and C. The Palestinian Authority has limited authority in Areas A and B. Israel controls all of Area C, over 60 percent of the West Bank.



Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, U.S. president Bill Clinton, and PLO chairman Yasser Arafat. (From the Public Domain)

The right of Palestinian refugees to return to the historic lands seized from them in 1948 when Israel was created — a right enshrined in international law — was given up by the PLO leader **Yasser Arafat**, instantly alienating many Palestinians, especially those in Gaza where 75 percent are refugees or the descendants of refugees. Edward Said [called](#) the Oslo agreement “an instrument of Palestinian surrender, a Palestinian Versailles” and lambasted Arafat as “the Pétain of the Palestinians.”

The scheduled Israeli military withdrawals under Oslo never took place. There was no provision in the interim agreement to end Jewish colonization, only a prohibition of “unilateral steps.” There were around 250,000 Jewish colonists in the West Bank at the time of the Oslo agreement. They have [increased](#) to at least 700,000. No final treaty was ever concluded.

The journalist Robert Fisk called Oslo “a sham, a lie, a trick to entangle Arafat and the PLO into abandonment of all that they had sought and struggled for over a quarter of a century, a method of creating false hope in order to emasculate the aspiration of statehood.”

Israeli prime minister **Yitzhak Rabin**, who signed the Oslo agreement, was [assassinated](#) on Nov. 4, 1995 following a rally in support of the agreement, by Yigal Amir, a far-right Jewish law student. **Itamar Ben-Gvir**, now Israel’s National Security Minister, was one of many rightwing politicians who issued [threats](#) against Rabin. Rabin’s widow, Leah, [blamed](#) Netanyahu and his supporters — who distributed leaflets at political rallies depicting Rabin in a Nazi uniform — for her husband’s murder.

Israel has carried out a series of murderous assaults on Gaza ever since, cynically [calling](#) the bombardment “mowing the lawn.” These attacks, which leave scores of dead and wounded and further degrade Gaza’s fragile infrastructure, have names such as Operation Rainbow (2004), Operation Days of Penitence (2004), Operation Summer Rains (2006), Operation Autumn Clouds (2006) and Operation Hot Winter (2008).

Israel [violated](#) the June 2008 ceasefire agreement with Hamas, brokered by Egypt, by launching a border raid that killed six Hamas members. The raid provoked, as Israel intended, a retaliatory strike by Hamas, which fired crude rockets and mortar shells into Israel. The Hamas barrage provided the pretext for a massive Israeli attack. Israel, as it always does, justified its military strike on the right to defend itself.

Operation Cast Lead (2008-2009), which saw Israel carry out a ground and aerial assault over 22 days, with the Israeli air force dropping over 1,000 tons of explosives on Gaza, killed 1,385 — [according to](#) the Israeli human rights group B’Tselem — of whom at least 762 were civilians, including 300 children. Four Israelis were killed over the same period by Hamas rockets and nine Israeli soldiers died in Gaza, four of whom were victims of “friendly fire.” The Israeli newspaper Haaretz would later report that “Operation Cast Lead” had been prepared over the previous six months.

Israeli historian Avi Shlaim, who served in the Israeli military, wrote that:

the brutality of Israel’s soldiers is fully matched by the mendacity of its spokesman...their propaganda is a pack of lies...It was not Hamas but the IDF that broke the ceasefire. It did so by a raid into Gaza on 4 November that killed six Hamas men. Israel’s objective is not just the defense of its population, but the eventual overthrow of the Hamas government in Gaza by turning the people against their rulers.

These series of attacks on Gaza were followed by Israeli assaults in November 2012, known as Operation Pillar of Defense and in July and August 2014 in Operation Protective Edge, a [seven week campaign](#) that left 2,251 Palestinians dead, along with 73 Israelis, including 67 soldiers.

These assaults by the Israeli military were followed in 2018 by largely peaceful protests by Palestinians, known as The Great March of Return, along Gaza’s fenced-in barrier. Over 266 Palestinians were [gunned down](#) by Israeli soldiers and 30,000 more were injured. In May 2021, Israel [killed](#) over 256 Palestinians in Gaza following [attacks](#) by Israeli police on Palestinian worshippers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem. Further [attacks](#) on worshippers at Al-Aqsa mosque took place in April 2023.

And then the breaching of the security barriers on Oct. 7, 2023 that enclose Gaza, where Palestinians had [languished](#) under a blockade for over 16 years in an open air prison. The attacks by Palestinian gunmen left some 1,200 Israeli [dead](#) — including hundreds [killed](#) by Israel itself — and gave Israel the excuse it had long sought to lay waste to Gaza, in its [Swords of Iron War](#).

This horrific saga is not over. Israel’s goals remain unchanged – the erasure of Palestinians from their land. This proposed ceasefire is one more cynical chapter. There are many ways it can and, I suspect, *will* fall apart.

But let us pray, at least for the moment, that the mass slaughter will stop.

*

Click the share button below to email/forward this article. Follow us on [Instagram](#) and [X](#) and subscribe to our [Telegram Channel](#). Feel free to repost Global Research articles with proper attribution.

Featured image: *Piece Plan* – by Mr. Fish ([Source](#))

Global Research is a reader-funded media. We do not accept any funding from corporations or governments. Help us stay afloat. Click the image below to make a one-time or recurring donation.



The original source of this article is [The Chris Hedges Report](#)
Copyright © [Chris Hedges](#), [The Chris Hedges Report](#), 2025

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Chris Hedges](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca
www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca