

The Trump Effect on Netanyahu in Gaza

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The ceasefire between Israel and Hamas will go into effect on January 19, after 15 months of war, and the deaths of more than 46,700 Palestinians, mainly women and children. Some are voicing concern that Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, is likely to break the ceasefire after the first phase for his political benefit. Israel has a long history of [breaking agreements](#) when it doesn't suit them, and manufacturing a narrative about how they were the victim.

However, this time it is different because on January 20, **Donald Trump** will be sworn into the office of the President of the United States, again.

Alan Pinkus, former Foreign Policy Adviser to Former Israeli Prime Minister **Ehud Barak** and former Consular General for Israel in New York, was interviewed by Al Jazeera on January 17. He agreed with the anchor's assessment that it would appear in Netanyahu's political interest to break the agreement after the first phase. Still, he stressed that Netanyahu would not be able to do that because **Trump had called the ceasefire "epic" in proportion.**

"This [EPIC ceasefire agreement](#) could have only happened as a result of our Historic Victory in November, as it signaled to the entire World that my Administration would seek Peace and negotiate deals to ensure the safety of all Americans, and our Allies," Trump wrote on his social media site Truth Social.

[Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert](#) was asked by POLITICO why Netanyahu would suddenly agree to the same deal that had been offered since May but had been repeatedly refused. Olmert replied, "Because he's afraid of Trump."

On January 7, Trump made a statement that cemented the ceasefire deal.

"All hell will break out. If those hostages aren't back, I don't want to hurt your negotiation, if they're not back by the time I get into office, [all hell will break out in the Middle East](#)," Trump said.

"It wasn't a warning to Hamas. It was a warning to Netanyahu. To Bibi," **Steve Bannon**, Trump's former chief strategist, told POLITICO.

Experts agree that the Israeli war on Hamas was over six months ago at least. The Palestinian resistance group attacked Israel on October 7, 2023, killing about 1,200, and taking 251 hostages. In the aftermath of the Israeli attack from land, sea, and air the Hamas leadership and military capabilities have been severely degraded. **What is left are the survivors of the former 2.3 million Gazans who have suffered ethnic**

cleansing, starvation, lack of medical care, and according to the UN and other groups, genocide. For months, Israel has just been killing unarmed civilians because no one can make them stop.

Trump had campaigned on stopping wars that the US is funding abroad. Through the Biden administration, Netanyahu was given the green light and fully funded the war in Gaza, even when the State Department criteria were no longer applicable. It is against US protocol to send weapons to any country which may violate international humanitarian law. Even though State Department staff resigned, as well as White House staff, that didn't stop Biden from sending the US tax-payers hard-earned dollars to Netanyahu to kill more kids.

Trump says he'll use the Gaza ceasefire's momentum to expand the 2020 Abraham Accords, which penned a normalization between Israel and the UAE, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan.

Saudi Arabia is seen as the big prize to be won, but Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has said the Kingdom will not normalize with Israel until there is an Israeli-Palestinian agreement.

When Netanyahu came into office in 2022, he promised two main goals.

Firstly, to expand the illegal Jewish settlements in the West Bank, which are viewed by the international community as illegal. He has delivered on the promise, and that is partly why ultra-extremists [Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir](#), both Jewish settlers themselves, have supported Netanyahu and propped him up as Prime Minister. Both have repeatedly threatened Netanyahu, that should he stop the war on Gaza, they would resign, and leave Netanyahu lacking the support he needs to remain in power.

Secondly, Netanyahu promised to sign Saudi Arabia to the Abraham Accords. The war on Gaza put that goal out of reach, but the ceasefire may open a window of opportunity to make good on Netanyahu's promise.

An outline of the ceasefire deal was announced on January 15 by Qatar, which brokered the deal along with the United States and Egypt.

During the [first six weeks of the deal](#), a complete ceasefire will be observed. In this period, Hamas would release 33 Israeli hostages, including civilian women, female soldiers, children, the elderly, and sick and wounded civilians.

Three hostages would be released on the first day, with the rest of the exchange taking place at intervals over the six weeks. Hamas is holding 94 captives, although Israel believes that only 60 are still alive.

In exchange for the hostages, several Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails would be released. **Israel is expected to release about 1,000 Palestinian prisoners in two stages.**

In the first six weeks, Israeli troops will pull out of all populated areas of Gaza, and there will be a surge in humanitarian aid deliveries to Gaza, with hundreds of trucks allowed in each day, as well as the rehabilitation of hospitals, clinics, and bakeries.

Stage two of the deal would be a permanent end to the war, and the remaining living

hostages, including men, would be released in return for more Palestinian prisoners.

A total of 1,000 Palestinian prisoners will be released in total, with about 190 serving sentences of 15 years or more. Those convicted of murder would not be released into the occupied West Bank, but instead to Gaza.

During stage two there would be a full withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza.

The third and final stage involves the reconstruction of Gaza and the return of any remaining hostages' bodies.

The reconstruction of Gaza is a mammoth project which will take decades. Critical water and electricity infrastructure is in ruins, and hospitals and schools no longer function.

The UN used satellite data recently to estimate that 69% of the structures in Gaza have been damaged or destroyed, including over 245,000 homes. The World Bank estimated \$18.5 billion in damage from just the first four months of the war.

The UN estimates that Gaza is filled with over 50 million tons of rubble. Even if 100 trucks were working full time, it would take over 15 years to clear the debris away.

In April 2024, the World Bank released a report estimating about \$18.5 billion will be needed to rebuild Gaza.

Recently, the World Health Organization said that rebuilding Gaza's health system would require around \$10 billion over the next five to seven years.

The United States and much of the international community want a revitalized Palestinian Authority to govern the West Bank and Gaza with the support of Arab countries ahead of eventual statehood. But Israel's government is opposed to a Palestinian state and has ruled out any role in Gaza for the US-backed authority.

International donors are unlikely to invest in an ungoverned territory that has seen five wars in less than two decades. **Without a political solution that is agreeable to Israel and the Palestinian people, Gaza can never be rebuilt, and tents will become a permanent home to most.**

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