

Hamas-Israel truce deal gets global welcome

WHO: Cease-fire would not end civilian suffering



Flares fall over Gaza, as seen from southern Israel, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian resistance group Hamas, on November 22, 2023.
● REUTERS

International Desk

Israel and Hamas agreed on Wednesday to a cease-fire in Gaza for at least four days, to let in aid and release at least 50 people captured by fighters in exchange for at least 150 Palestinians jailed in Israel. Nations around the globe welcomed the announcement that Israel and Hamas reached a deal to exchange prisoners and pause Israel's ferocious fighting and bombardment in Gaza. The World Health Organization also welcomed the deal, but the UN health agency's chief said it would not end civilian suffering.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, who was in Beirut told a press conference upon his arrival in Beirut, "The six weeks of resistance in Gaza proved that the main losers in the face of global public opinion are the United States and Israel." "There is no doubt that the future of Gaza and Palestine will be determined by the Palestinian people alone," he added. Amir-Abdollahian quoted the leaders of the resistance as saying that the fingers of the resistance will remain on the trigger until the realization of the full rights of Palestinians and the complete libera-

tion of Palestine. The first truce in a brutal seven-week-old war, reached after mediation by Qatar, was hailed around the world as a sign of progress that could ease the suffering of Gaza's civilians and the exchange of prisoners. Israel said the cease-fire could be extended further, as long as more hostages were freed. Hamas and allied groups captured around 240 Israelis when fighters rampaged through southern Israeli towns on Oct. 7. Previously, Hamas had released just four. The truce was not expected to begin until Thursday

morning. The Palestinian Authority hailed the truce, calling for a more permanent cease-fire. "President Mahmoud Abbas and the leadership welcome the humanitarian truce agreement, value the Qatari-Egyptian effort made, and reaffirm the call for a comprehensive cessation of the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people and the entry of humanitarian aid," senior PA official Hussein al-Sheikh wrote on X. US President Joe Biden thanked the leaders of Qatar and Egypt for their "critical leadership" in reaching the deal. Mentioning the release of

prisoners, he expressed his gratification that the prisoners "will be reunited with their families once this deal is fully implemented".

British Foreign Secretary David Cameron called the deal a crucial step towards providing relief to the families of the prisoners and addressing the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said the "breakthrough" agreement "must be used to bring vital aid to people in Gaza".

Beijing hoped "that it will help ease the plight of the humanitarian crisis, de-escalate the conflict and ease tensions", said Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning.

The Kremlin called the deal "the first good news from Gaza in a very long time", noting that "it is only on the basis of these kinds of pauses that some outlines of future attempts at a sustainable settlement can be built".

Egypt, which helped broker the deal, hailed the success in creating a "humanitarian truce," according to President Abdel-Fattah al-Sissi, who welcomed the deal and noted "the continuation of the Egyptian efforts to reach final and sustainable

solutions... to guarantee the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people".

Jordan's Foreign Ministry also issued a statement, praising Qatar and Egypt for their roles in brokering the "humanitarian truce". The statement stressed that the truce must allow for increased aid to Gaza and lead to a more permanent cease-fire which stops the "targeting of Palestinians and their forced displacement".

Turkey's Foreign Ministry said it hoped the "humanitarian pause" will be part of efforts "to completely end the conflict as soon as possible and initiate a process towards a just and lasting peace on the basis of a two-state solution".

EU chief Ursula von der Leyen said she had ordered her European Commission to step up aid deliveries to Gaza. "The European Commission will do its utmost to use this pause for a humanitarian surge to Gaza," she said in a statement, adding, "I wholeheartedly welcome the agreement".

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres "welcomes the agreement reached by Israel and Hamas, with the mediation of Qatar, supported by Egypt and the United States," a spokesman for the UN chief said in a statement, adding, "This is an important step in the right direction, but much more needs to be done".

AFP, Reuters, and IRNA contributed to this report.

Public opinion pressuring Western gov'ts



By Seyed Davood Aghaee
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OPINION EXCLUSIVE

The surprise attack by Hamas on Israel on October 7 and the significant losses suffered by Israelis in this operation was akin to an earthquake in the occupied territories and Netanyahu's cabinet. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had stated in the early days that, following the Holocaust, the damage from Operation Al-Aqsa Storm was the most substantial inflicted on Jews. This operation, for Israel, which had claimed to have created the utmost security for its citizens, proved to be a severe blow. Consequently, in an attempt to cover and recover from the heavy blow it had received, Israel initiated destructive attacks against the people of Gaza, which continue to this day.

Leaders of the United States and several European countries showed solidarity with Israel and supported the attacks on Gaza under the guise of "right to self-defense". The US and Europe believed that, given Israel's military superiority compared to Hamas, the Israeli Army could quickly achieve its goals of destroying Hamas and freeing hostages. However, the situation did not unfold as Israel desired and its supporters envisioned. Hamas resisted vigorously and, after 48 days, Israel has yet to achieve its objectives, and Hamas remains steadfast.

In the early days of the war, Israel, with the aid of media campaign, managed to sway public opinion in its favor, adding the term "right to self-defense" to the scope of its attacks. However, as time passed and more angles of the events of October 7 came to light, coupled with the intensification of Israel's atrocities in Gaza, which starkly contradicts human rights, world public opinion turned against Israel. Demonstrations and large rallies were held, not only in Arab and Islamic countries, but also in the capitals of Western countries that supported Israel, where people demanded an end to the war. Public opinion in Western countries, contrary to their governments' positions, rose in support of the people of Gaza.

With the heightened global sentiment against Israel and in support of the people of Gaza, especially with the prolonged war and significant casualties, doubts arose among Western policymakers. They questioned whether they should continue to support Israel unconditionally and remain silent in the face of the massacre of the people. Differences of opinion emerged among Western politicians, especially in the United States, regarding whether the policy of unconditional support for Israel was justified. Public voices resoundingly declare that this unconditional support was not the right policy. It seems that under the influence of this public pressure and the questioning of Western claims, such as the pursuit of peace and the observance of human rights by Israel, President Joe Biden and the US government are gradually shifting their stance and expressing criticism of Israel's behavior. This change in position, however, does not signify a fundamental shift in U.S. policy towards Israel, but rather tactical adjustments. US politicians see that their claimed values of striving for peace and respecting human rights are losing credibility globally due to Israel's actions.

Public opinion is a powerful tool in shaping the policies of the Western world, and it appears to gradually influence the positions of Western governments regarding the Gaza war. To prevent further global discredit, the US government must pay attention to public sentiment and, at the very least, modify its policy of unconditional support for Israel's attacks.

Israel is losing on both fronts

By Mohammad Mardani Nokandeh

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OPINION EXCLUSIVE

In today's wars, every battle has two fronts, says an envoy of the apartheid regime of Israel; the first is the battlefield, where the key elements are soldiers, weaponry, and ammunition, and the other is public opinion. The United States attacked Iraq and Afghanistan to extract free oil and minerals and have a closer look at the soon-to-be dominant power in the West Asia region, Iran, under the pretext of fighting terrorism. The Americans got millions killed in the process and achieved nothing.

United States nuked Japan, napalmed Vietnam, created and armed ISIS — as former president Donald Trump put it — and got many governments to support it logistically. After seeing its plans fail at the

hands of the Iranian hero Major General Soleimani, the US took revenge and assassinated him and denounced him as a terrorist, with its allies following in its footsteps. The country has thus repeatedly lost the battle for public opinion but bounced back every time by taking advantage of Hollywood, mainstream media, the fading Dollar, and the corruption, fear, weakness, and greed of some other world leaders.

In the case of Israel and Palestine, even the recent war has been different. While Hamas forces are mobilizing under and over the ground to open a front and fight against the occupying enemies, the occupiers cowardly airstrike schools, mosques, and most importantly, the hospitals. Meanwhile, you can hear here and there that the Israelis say Hamas is spreading disturbing pictures from other wars as propaganda to victimize itself. The Zionist regime

bombs Gazan Hospitals, which are filled to the brim with injured people, and calls it Hamas' false flag operations.

Unlike the military front, there is a major difference in the second front of this "genocide, not war". This time, we are witnessing an eye-opening shift in public opinion. Although the true narration of what is going on in Gaza is being suppressed and silenced under heavy bombardments, we are witnessing rallies in the world's major capitals that call for a ceasefire in Gaza. Massive crowds in unprecedented numbers expressed their hatred for Israel.

Before the historic October 7, 2023, the world was slowly forgetting the misery of the Palestinian people. Arab leaders, who were supposed to be supporters of Palestine, were finding their peace with the Zionists. Not only the right to self-determination for the people of Gaza was fading away

in the discourse, some were generously offering the occupiers a two-state solution, but the amount of children's blood spilled on the streets and hospitals of Gaza since October 7, shook the world. No one in their right mind can witness the gruesome actions of an infamous regime against a small population of defenseless civilians and stay quiet. The violent genocide that Israel inflicted against the defenseless men, children, and women of Palestine made it impossible to legitimize their actions under the pretext of self-defense against alleged "Hamas terrorism".

The outcome of the war on the second front is already determined; Palestine won the public opinion, even though at the cost of nearly 5,000 innocent children — among a total chilling number of 12,000 bodies — who were supposed to have a normal life ahead of them. The world is restless and hates Israel, no amount of Semitism or

anti-Semitism sugar-coating can reverse this hatred, and nothing can fix this humiliating loss.

In response to the envoys of the apartheid illegal regime who claim in self-righteousness that Hamas is an entity you cannot reason with, one must ask, "What kind of reason?" Is it the "I kill your family members and relatives, kick you out of your home, overtake your land, and get away with it with the support of allied colonial powers and you should take it and move on or I'll kill your people even more" kind of reason?

How dare anyone victimize Israel and blame Hamas? What are we blaming them for? Blame them for retaliating the slaughter of their loved ones in previous Zionist raids, or for standing their ground to the last drop of their blood? What happened to us to think that way? What treaty did they violate? When did they consent to occupation?

Keep talking about a two-state solution. Why would the Palestinian people give away their homeland to the occupiers?

They say Hamas attacked civilians and took them as hostages. First of all, there is a major damning argument that the footage of Hamas attacks was staged by the loyal henchmen of Netanyahu — whose administration is destined to fall apart due to corruption — to use it as a uniting cement and justify the genocide against Gaza people. Secondly, I don't even call them hostages. I simply call the move an arrest and capture of illegal immigrants and trespassers because none of them obtained permission from the Palestinians before entering Palestine.

Let us all join the free souls of the world in support of Palestine and play a part in ending the ongoing genocide of Palestinians as the seven-decades-old "spider's web," known as Israel, is breaking apart.