



# The Sabra Report

## Israel Rejects Hamas Three-Stage Ceasefire Proposal

Samia Nakhoul and Andrew Mills, Reuters, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024

### Recap:

Hamas proposed a ceasefire plan to end the war in Gaza. Israel swiftly rejected the offer, calling it “delusional”.

### The Context:

- ✦ Israel began its military offensive in Gaza after Hamas killed 1,200 people and took 253 hostages from southern Israel on October 7<sup>th</sup>. More than 27,000 Palestinians have been killed in the ensuing war, including 10,000 Hamas gunmen [1]. In November, a ceasefire deal was reached in which 50 Israeli hostages were exchanged for 150 Palestinian prisoners. In January, a deal was reached to allow more aid into Gaza in exchange for medication needed to treat Israeli hostages still held by Hamas however, nearly a month after the deal was signed, the medication delivery is still not verified. At least 31 hostages held in Gaza are no longer alive and another 20 are also feared dead [2].
- ✦ The latest Israeli backed proposal sought a 45-day ceasefire along with the release of all Israeli hostages under the age of 19 or wounded, in exchange for an agreed-upon number of Palestinian prisoners. Hamas countered with a three-phase plan, lasting 45 days each. During the first stage all women, males under 19, the elderly and sick would be released in exchange for the release of Palestinian women and children from Israeli jails. Remaining male hostages would be released during the second phase and bodies exchanged in the third phase. By the end of the third phase, Hamas expects an end to the war. The deal is contingent on increased aid into Gaza, a commitment to rebuild Gaza and a full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza [3] in addition to the release of 1,500 prisoners, a third of whom are serving life sentences.
- ✦ Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rejected the offer out of hand saying, “we are on the way to complete victory within a matter of months” and that “surrendering to Hamas will just invite another massacre [4].” US President Joe Biden described Hamas’s offer as “a little over the top” and Secretary of State Anthony Blinken once again traveled to the Middle East to try and stabilize the region. With elections looming, the Biden administration is desperately trying to stem a widening regional escalation. A Gaza ceasefire is seen by the US as the most realistic way to do so [5].

### Conversation Points:

- ✦ Why did Hamas offer a proposal it knew Israel would not accept?
- ✦ Can Hamas be trusted to return all hostages if they are what’s guaranteeing Hamas’s survival?
- ✦ Will Biden’s support of Israel ebb as he continues to shed backing from his Arab and left wing constituents?
- ✦ Has Israel found itself in its current situation because it didn’t see its previous wars with Hamas through?

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### Notes:

1. [Hamas proposes 3-stage 135-day truce and hostage deal, leading to war’s end – reports](#), Times of Israel, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024.
2. Ibid.
3. [Hamas proposes three-stage ceasefire over 135 days, leading to end of war](#), DARCIE GRUNBLATT, Jerusalem Post, FEBRUARY 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024.
4. [Netanyahu rejects Hamas cease-fire deal says 'complete victory' is within a 'matter of months'](#), Timothy H.J. Nerozzi, Fox News, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024.
5. [Israel-Gaza war: Hamas responds to proposed Gaza ceasefire plan](#), BBC, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

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