

Israel-Hamas war

Israel-Hamas truce talks stall after Mossad negotiators leave Qatar

Israel accuses militant group of reneging on agreement and resumes bombardment of Gaza



Palestinian health officials said at least 193 people had died in Gaza since the truce broke down © AFP via Getty Images

Chloe Cornish in Jerusalem and **Andrew England** in London DECEMBER 2 2023

Qatari and Egyptian efforts to broker another truce between Israel and Hamas stalled on Saturday after Benjamin Netanyahu ordered a team of Mossad negotiators to return from Doha to Israel.

The Israeli prime minister's office accused Hamas of not fulfilling its part of [the agreement](#), which included the release of all children and women according to a list that Israel said was approved by the militant organisation.

A team from Mossad, an Israeli intelligence agency, had been in Doha on Saturday to discuss the possibility of resuming the truce to allow more women and children to be released, a person briefed on the talks said.

Discussions made little progress and the Israeli team left later on Saturday, the person said.

Negotiators had also hoped to explore the potential next stage of an hostage-prisoner exchange agreement. Qatar, along with the US and Egypt, has been mediating in the talks and liaising with Hamas, whose political leaders are based in Doha.

Israel and Hamas have blamed each other for the breakdown of the truce, which came into effect on November 24. Under the agreement, Hamas freed 84 women and

children while Israel released about 240 Palestinian women and children from prison.

The deal collapsed when Hamas appeared to struggle to locate more women and children to release on Friday, people briefed on the talks said. Hamas said that it had made offers to return hostages, including elderly captives.

Israel accused Hamas of reneging on the agreement, which had been extended twice, and responded by resuming its bombardment of Gaza.

The Israel Defense Forces said Hamas was still holding 136 people hostage, among them 17 women and children. The remainder of the hostages are mainly Israeli soldiers and reservists. It has notified the families of four people who died in captivity in Gaza during the past week.

Negotiations to secure the release of soldiers and reservists will probably be complicated as the militant group is expected to push for greater Israeli concessions.

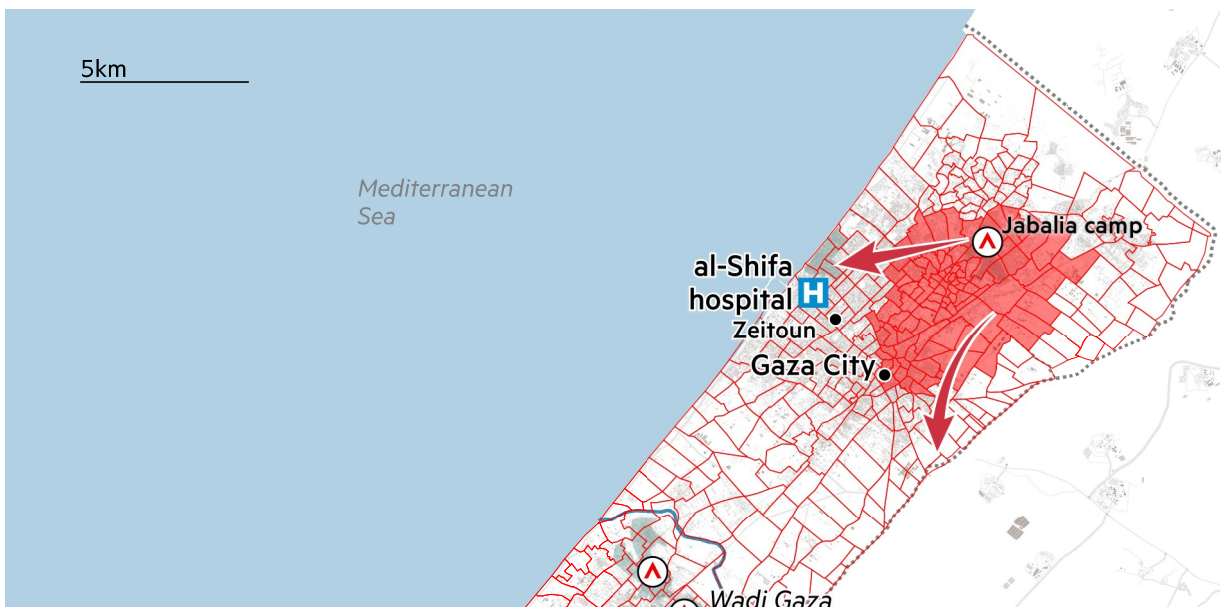
Since the breakdown of the truce, Israel's offensive in Gaza has killed 193 people, Palestinian health officials said on Saturday.

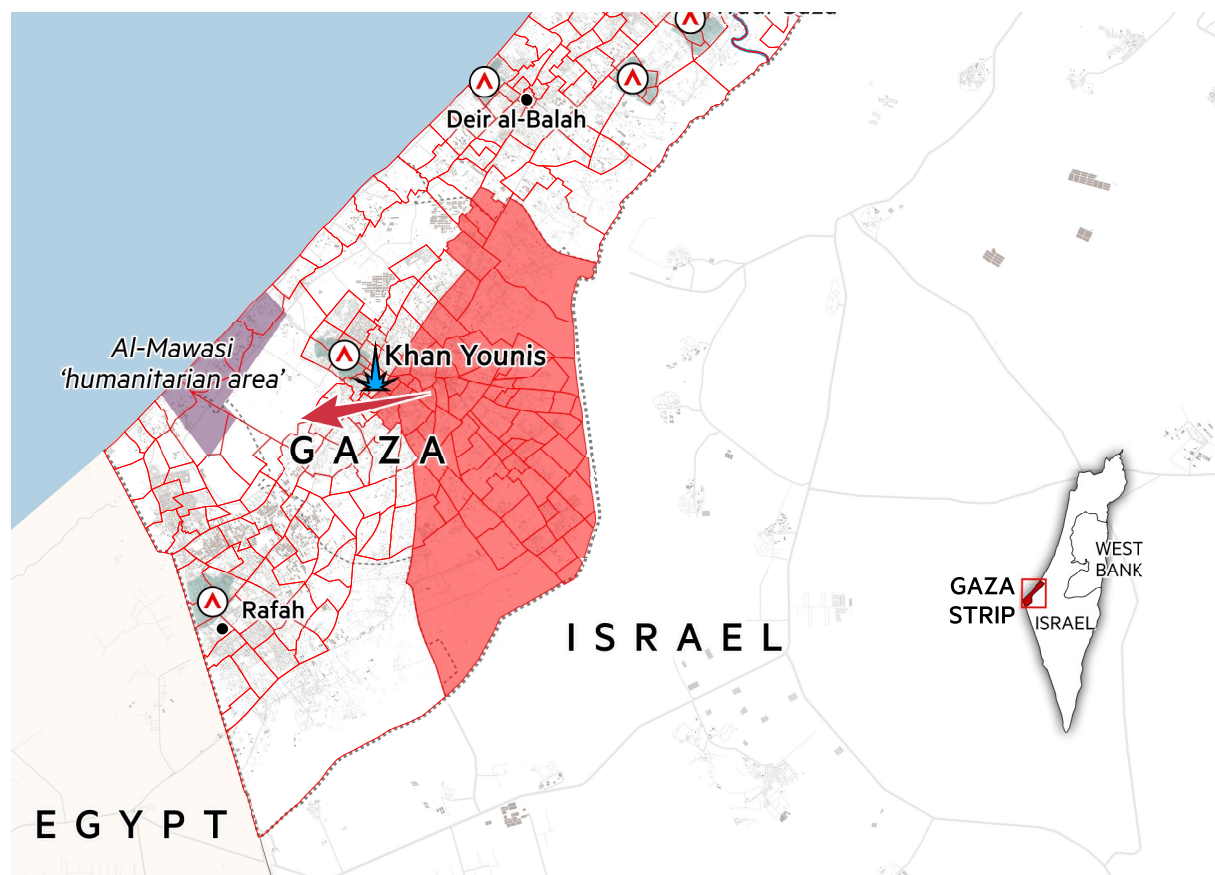
Israel's military said it had hit multiple "terror targets" in northern Gaza, including a mosque it said was being used as a command centre by militants. It added that its jets "struck over 50 targets in the area of Khan Younis" in southern Gaza overnight.

Gazans have been ordered by IDF to evacuate from certain blocks

■ Blocks ordered to evacuate
 Ⓜ Refugee camp

✦ Reported missile strikes
 Ⓜ Refugee camp area





Last updated: Dec 2 9am GMT. Sources: FT research, Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project, Gisha, OpenStreetMap, IDF

About 80 per cent of the 2.3mn population of Gaza is packed into the south after Israel ordered civilians to move from the strip's north.

The IDF sent text messages and dropped leaflets on Friday telling people in areas east of Khan Younis, the biggest city in the strip's south, to leave for Rafah, near Gaza's border with Egypt.

However "no major displacement from these areas has been reported", said the UN's humanitarian co-ordination office on Friday evening, while Rafah was hit by at least one Israeli air strike on Friday morning.

[The UN](#) added that an online map published by the IDF, which divides Gaza into pockets of land to explain where civilians should leave, "does not specify where people should evacuate to".

“It is unclear how those residing in Gaza would access the map without electricity and amid recurrent telecommunications cuts,” the UN added.

Relief organisations have refused Israel’s demands to establish a small “safe zone” in Al-Mawasi, a strip of agricultural land on the coast, saying a unilaterally declared safe area could endanger civilians.

“Unfortunately we’ve not seen huge amounts of people going [to Al-Mawasi] so we are adjusting our operational assessment of the situation on the ground,” IDF spokesperson Peter Lerner said.

He added that Israeli ground troops were facing “urban warfare, close combat . . . explosive devices, anti tank guided missiles, RPGs, sniper fire and machine gun fire”, and insisted that the IDF was “determined to distinguish between the civilians . . . and the terrorists”.

Western allies continued to press Israel to do more to protect civilians.

French President Emmanuel Macron, who is heading to Doha for talks on a longer-term ceasefire, said: “We’re at a moment at which Israel is going to have to precisely define its objectives and the final result it is seeking. What is the total destruction of Hamas and does anyone believe it is possible? If that’s what it is, the war will last 10 years.”

Kamala Harris, US vice-president, said America was working “to support some ability to reopen the pause to have a deal . . . so we can get hostages out and get aid in”.

Harris, who spoke to the emir of Qatar and met regional leaders from Egypt, Jordan and the UAE while attending the COP28 climate conference in Dubai, called on Israel to “do more to protect innocent civilians”.

Harris said Washington wanted to see no “forcible displacement” of people, no “reoccupation” or “siege” of Gaza, no “reduction” in territory and no use of Gaza as a “platform” for terrorism. In the long term, she said the US was pushing for the economic reconstruction of Gaza, stronger security arrangements and the revitalisation of the Palestinian Authority to help forge a “two state” solution.

On Saturday morning, sirens sounded across Israeli communities near Gaza, the IDF said, after Palestinian militants restarted rocket launches across the border.

The families of hostages have vowed to keep pressing for their release, with one

relative calling the truce's end "a huge disappointment".

Hamas kidnapped 240 people and killed 1,200 in a brutal attack on southern Israel on October 7, triggering a ferocious response from Israel that has killed more than 15,200 people, according to Palestinian health officials.

Civilians in Gaza "have nowhere safe to go and very little to survive on", said Martin Griffiths, a senior UN official for humanitarian affairs. "They live surrounded by disease, destruction and death".

The Palestinian Red Crescent Society said it received 50 trucks of aid on Saturday, including food and medical supplies.

Additional reporting by James Politi in Washington and Sarah White in Paris

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