

**Israel-Hamas war**

## Joe Biden announces new Israel-Hamas peace proposals

Three-phase plan includes six-week ceasefire and release of hostages in latest effort to end conflict



US President Joe Biden said: ' Hamas says it wants a ceasefire. This deal is an opportunity to prove whether they really mean it'  
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**James Politi** in Washington and **Andrew England** in London 5 HOURS AGO

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US President Joe Biden said Israel had offered a new proposal in negotiations with Hamas to free hostages and bring about a lasting ceasefire, as he urged both sides in the conflict to embrace his hopes for broader peace in the Middle East.

Biden made the comments in a statement from the White House on Friday, in his most emphatic attempt yet to broker an agreement that would bring an end to the conflict.

The move comes after a new wave of [international condemnation](#) of Israel's conduct of the [war against Hamas](#) following a deadly strike and ground operations in the [city of Rafah](#) in southern Gaza, where more than 1mn displaced Palestinians have been sheltering.

The US president said the Israeli proposal — coming after negotiators and international mediators reignited talks in recent days — would involve three phases.

The first would establish a “full and complete ceasefire” over six weeks, including the withdrawal of Israeli forces from “densely populated” areas of Gaza, and the return of some hostages, including Americans, alongside the release of some Palestinian prisoners.

A second phase would involve the release of all hostages and a “permanent cessation of hostilities” combined with a full withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza. The third phase would relate to the “reconstruction” of Gaza, designed to lead to broader stabilisation in the Middle East.

Biden acknowledged there could be opposition in Israel to the plan. “I know there are those in Israel who will not agree with this plan and will call for the war to continue indefinitely. Some are even in the government coalition,” he said.

“Well, I urge leadership in Israel to stand behind this deal despite whatever pressure comes,” he added, calling on Hamas to accept it too.

“Hamas says it wants a ceasefire. This deal is an opportunity to prove whether they really mean it. Hamas needs to take the deal,” Biden said.

Hamas said in a statement that it “positively views” Biden’s speech and it was ready to “deal positively and in a constructive manner with any proposal that is based on a permanent ceasefire and the full withdrawal [of Israeli forces] from the Gaza Strip, the reconstruction [of Gaza], and the return of displaced people to their homes, along with the completion of a genuine prisoner swap deal”, as long as Israel “clearly announces commitment to such deal”.

The office of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said his government was “united in the desire to return our hostages as soon as possible and is working to achieve this goal”.

It added: “Israel’s conditions for ending the war have not changed: the destruction of Hamas’s military and governing capabilities, the freeing of all hostages and ensuring that Gaza no longer poses a threat to Israel. Under the proposal, Israel will continue to insist these conditions are met before a permanent ceasefire is put in place. The notion that Israel will agree to a permanent ceasefire before these conditions are fulfilled is a non-starter.”

A senior Biden administration official said the Israeli proposal had been transmitted to Hamas on Thursday. The official said it was only possible for Israel to put forth the plan now because of the “success they’ve had in degrading Hamas’s military capacity”, arguing that it offered a path to “the end of the crisis”.

Separately, on Friday US congressional leaders formally invited Netanyahu to address a joint meeting of Congress. In a letter to the Israeli leader they wrote: “We

invite you to snare the Israeli government's vision for defending democracy, combating terror, and establishing a just and lasting peace in the region.”

While Netanyahu is under mounting international pressure to end the conflict, he also faces pressure from far-right members of his ruling coalition, on whom he depends for his political survival, not to make concessions to the Palestinians or agree to a permanent ceasefire.

Biden's announcement comes as his administration faces growing pressure both internationally and from parts of his Democratic party to persuade Netanyahu to wind down military operations in Rafah and embrace a political solution to the conflict.

The president has withheld one shipment of bombs to Israel but otherwise declined to cut any further military aid, even after the latest Israeli offensive in Rafah, which Washington had warned against.

Progress towards a pause in hostilities appeared to be made at the end of April, when Israel made concessions on key conditions, including agreeing on language calling for a “sustainable calm” in the second phase and allowing displaced Gazans to return to the north.

A week later, Hamas said it had broadly accepted the proposal but it wanted changes that Israel described as “far” from its requirements. Hours afterwards, Netanyahu's far-right government began its offensive on Rafah, despite US and UN warnings that a military operation would have dire consequences.

The assault on Rafah stalled the talks, but David Barnea, the head of Israel's intelligence service, Mossad, held talks with US CIA chief Bill Burns and Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani, in Paris last week as mediators sought to revive the negotiations.

A diplomat briefed on the negotiations said during the meeting in Paris that Israel indicated it wanted to resume the hostage talks, but Hamas later said it would not as long as [Israel's offensive in Rafah](#) continued.

The talks have been repeatedly deadlocked over Hamas's insistence that any hostage deal end with a permanent ceasefire and the full withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza, which Netanyahu has rejected.

Hamas seized about 250 hostages during its October 7 attack that killed 1,200 people, according to Israeli officials. About 130 captives are believed to be held in

Gaza, although some are thought to have died in captivity.

Israel's offensive in the besieged strip has killed more than 36,000 people, according to Palestinian officials.

*Additional reporting by James Shotter and Neri Zilber*

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