

**Israel-Hamas war**

## Qatar suspends its mediation of Israel-Hamas talks

Announcement by Gulf state reveals frustration about warring parties' failure to agree an end to war in Gaza



Israelis look on at northern Gaza from a viewpoint near the border on November 9 © Reuters

**Andrew England** in London 2 HOURS AGO

Qatar has suspended its efforts to mediate a ceasefire and hostage deal between Israel and Hamas in a sign of the Gulf state's mounting frustration with the warring parties' failure to agree to end the war in Gaza.

The move by Doha underscores the struggle mediators, including the US and Egypt, have faced during months of tortuous talks intended to halt the more than year-long [conflict](#). Both Israel and Hamas have refused to make the necessary compromises to reach an agreement.

The Qatari foreign ministry said on Saturday that Doha had informed Israel and Hamas 10 days ago that it would "stall its efforts" if an agreement was not reached during the most recent round of failed talks, which were held last month.

The foreign ministry statement was released a day after a US official said the Biden administration had told [Qatar](#) that Hamas's presence in Doha was "no longer viable or acceptable".

A diplomat briefed on the talks said Doha has warned Hamas that if the group was not willing to engage seriously in the negotiations it [would not be able to retain its political office the Gulf state](#). But they added that it was Qatar's decision and not a result of US pressure.

Doha has hosted Hamas's political office since 2012 and the ceasefire talks have primarily been held in the Qatari capital.

“The Qataris took this decision after both sides repeatedly refused to participate in the negotiations except on their basis without showing willingness to engage constructively,” the diplomat said. “As a consequence, the Hamas political office no longer serves its purpose.”

Qatar, an important US ally in the region, has been one of the lead mediators looking to end the conflict and secure the release of hostages since Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack killed about 1,200 people, according to Israel, and triggered the war in Gaza.

But it has drawn criticism from some US lawmakers for its role in hosting the militant group's political leadership.

In addition, Doha has been angered by attacks on it by Israeli politicians, including Prime Minister [Benjamin Netanyahu](#), and pressure on Qatar to do more to convince Hamas to accept a deal, as well as the lack of progress with the talks.

In April, the Gulf state said it was re-evaluating its role as a mediator as it complained that its efforts were being undermined by politicians with “narrow interests”. That caused some Hamas leaders to move to Turkey, which is sympathetic to the group.

But Doha continued to work with the US and Egypt to secure a deal after requests by the Biden administration in Israel, the diplomat said.

In September, Qatar expressed its anger with Netanyahu's far-right government, saying Israel's approach was “based on an attempt to falsify facts and mislead world public opinion by repeating lies” that would “lead to the demise of peace efforts”.

But it has also been frustrated by Hamas's intransigence, including after a US-led effort last month to broker a short-term truce and the release of some of the remaining 101 Israeli hostages held in Gaza failed to break the deadlock.

Hamas has been insisting for weeks that it would only accept a version of a multi-phased deal that would lead to a permanent ceasefire and Israel's withdrawal from the strip in return for the release of hostages, which it endorsed at the beginning of July.

Netanyahu, meanwhile, has repeatedly rejected a permanent end to the war and the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the devastated Gaza strip, where Israel's offensive

has killed more than 43,000 people, according to Palestinian health officials.

Israel has launched a [massive new offensive in northern Gaza](#) in recent weeks, and allowed barely any aid deliveries to the thousands of people still sheltering there. The offensive has killed hundreds of people, and Wafa, the Palestinian news agency, reported on Sunday that dozens were killed and wounded in an Israeli strike in Jabalia.

Israeli officials say the offensive is aimed at preventing Hamas from regrouping in northern Gaza. But human rights groups say Israel is fuelling a humanitarian catastrophe and a spokesman for the UN secretary-general said on Friday that Israel's assault was "preventing Palestinians [in north Gaza] accessing the essentials for their survival . . . including water".

The Qatari foreign ministry statement said Doha would resume its mediation efforts "when the parties show their willingness and seriousness to end the brutal war and the ongoing suffering of civilians caused by catastrophic humanitarian conditions in the strip".

But it added that Qatar would not "accept that mediation be a reason for blackmailing it" and "exploiting the continuation of negotiations to justify continuation of the war to serve narrow political purposes".

*Additional reporting by James Shotter in Jerusalem*

---

[Copyright](#) The Financial Times Limited 2024. All rights reserved.

---

