

## Middle East war

# Donald Trump tells Israel to stop bombing Gaza after Hamas agrees to release hostages

US president says he 'believes' Palestinian militant group is 'ready for a lasting peace'



Smoke rises over Gaza City on Thursday after a missile strike © AP

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Donald Trump has called on Israel to “immediately” stop bombing Gaza, after Hamas agreed to release all Israeli hostages as part of the US president’s plan to end the two-year war in Gaza.

“Israel must immediately stop the bombing of Gaza so that we can get the Hostages out safely and quickly!” Trump posted on his Truth Social platform. “I believe they [Hamas] are ready for a lasting PEACE.”

[Hamas](#) said in a statement on Friday that it would release all remaining 48 captives, “both living and deceased”, in line with terms laid out in the US president’s 20-point plan, which he presented on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly last week.

The militant group thanked Trump and Arab states for their efforts to end the war and said it was ready to “immediately enter negotiations, through the mediators, to discuss the details of this matter”.

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Donald Trump: 'Everybody was unified in wanting this war to end and seeing peace in the Middle East, and we're very close to achieving that' © Donald J Trump/Truth Social/Reuters

In a video posted to Truth Social after Hamas's statement, Trump hailed the deal as "maybe unprecedented". He added: "We'll see how it all turns out — we have to get the final word down in concrete."

The president praised Middle Eastern countries that had backed his plan, considering it the best hope to end Israel's offensive in [Gaza](#).

"Everybody was unified in wanting this war to end and seeing peace in the Middle East, and we're very close to achieving that . . . Everybody will be treated fairly," he said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said earlier this week he supported the plan, with caveats. His country is in the midst of a new offensive on Gaza City, the enclave's largest urban centre.

But following Hamas's response late Friday, his office said Israel was "preparing for the immediate implementation of the first stage of President Trump's plan for the immediate release of all the hostages", without providing details.

The statement added that the war would end only in "accordance with the principles

set forth by Israel”..

The Israeli military later said it had received instructions from the “political echelon” to “advance readiness . . . for the release of the hostages,” and that it was moving additional capabilities to the Southern Command, which runs the war in Gaza, “to ensure the protection of the troops”.

It was not clear if there was any pause in the fighting in Gaza as demanded by Trump on Thursday night.

Britain’s Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer welcomed Hamas’s “acceptance” of the US peace plan as a “significant step forward”. He praised Trump’s efforts and called on all sides to “implement the agreement without delay”.

Trump’s proposals for a ceasefire and postwar plan for Gaza include an international supervisory body overseeing a Palestinian committee of technocrats that would administer the strip; the deployment of a stabilisation force that would be responsible for security alongside Palestinian personnel and the redeployment of Israeli forces.

Under the terms of the deal, Israel would release some 2,000 Palestinian prisoners and allow a surge in aid into the strip, northern parts of which are enduring a man-made famine, according to UN experts.

Analysts said Israel and Hamas were likely to want to renegotiate elements of the plan, some of the details of which are vague. They also warn there will be significant hurdles to implementing the proposal and getting the warring parties to agree on the finer details.

A person briefed on the talks said the main issues Hamas wanted to negotiate included details of the Israeli troop withdrawal from the strip and the international stabilisation force the plan envisages deploying there.

Qatari foreign ministry spokesman Majed al-Ansari said the Gulf state and Egypt — the two main Arab mediators — had begun working with the US to complete discussions on the plan to ensure an end to the war.

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Hamas said it would be willing to hand over power to a “Palestinian body of independents (technocrats), based on Palestinian national consensus and with Arab and Islamic backing”.

But it said that points raised in the proposal related to Gaza’s future and Palestinians’ “inalienable rights” would need to be decided on the basis of a “unified national position” agreed with other factions and based on international law.

The statement from the Palestinian militant group came just hours after Trump warned on Truth Social that if Hamas did not accept his peace plan by Sunday “all HELL, like no one has ever seen before, will break out”.

Arab states pressured Hamas to accept the proposal, viewing it as the best chance to end the conflict.

Israel’s offensive has killed more than 66,000 Gazans, according to Palestinian health officials, and turned much of the strip into rubble-strewn wastelands. The war was triggered by Hamas’s October 7, 2023 attack, during which militants killed 1,200 people and seized 250 hostages, according to Israel.

In an interview with Qatar-based network Al Jazeera immediately after the statement was issued, Mousa Abu Marzouk, a senior Hamas official, said that while the group had accepted all the main points presented in the US plan, “every one of those issues has details that need to be discussed”.

Pressed about the group’s own disarmament — an explicit demand in Trump’s plan but one Hamas did not address in its statement — he said that it would only hand over its weapons “if the occupation ends and Palestinians can govern themselves”.

Abu Marzouk said the statement was issued after “broad consultations” with most Palestinian factions, allies, mediators and experts on international law. The other factions “expressed support for everything included in it”, he added.

*Additional reporting by David Sheppard*

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