

At crossroads in Gaza: Why the ceasefire deal is a defining moment

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We stand today at a pivotal crossroad in the war in Gaza. The war could either end or linger for an unspecified duration, leading to more catastrophic consequences. The ceasefire proposal on the table, proposed by Egypt and Qatar, can save the region from further bloodshed and pave the way for healing.

The proposal offers a 60-day truce during which negotiators would work on a sustainable ceasefire to end the war. It will return 10 Israeli hostages, retrieve 18 bodies of those deceased, and release Palestinian detainees locked in Israeli prisons. It will provide dire humanitarian and medical assistance to Palestinians who have suffered and endured a horrific humanitarian tragedy.

For Israel, the ceasefire deal guarantees the return of hostages. For Palestinians, it secures the delivery of urgent humanitarian assistance. This is a critical opening that can shift the trajectory of the conflict, from an endless cycle of violence to a pathway for de-escalation and healing. Hamas has accepted the proposal. The ball is now in Israel's court. Its decision will either put the conflict on a path to closure or a path of continued conflict.

But as we work to secure a ceasefire deal, we must urgently provide humanitarian assistance to Palestinians in Gaza. While visiting the Rafah crossing recently, I listened firsthand to testimonies by aid workers and truck drivers about the deliberate delays and obstruction of humanitarian assistance. Thousands of trucks were lined up at the border with life-saving humanitarian supplies. And while the Rafah crossing from the Egyptian side has always remained open, Israel's occupation of the Palestinian side of the crossing has obstructed the flow of assistance. As the United Nations and several U.N. agencies have confirmed, Gaza is suffering from a man-made famine.

In the face of these immense challenges, Egypt has shouldered a leading role in alleviating the suffering of Palestinians in Gaza. Egypt has provided more than 70% of the total humanitarian and relief assistance delivered to Gaza, estimated at 550,000 tons of food and medical supplies since the beginning of the war. This effort has been supported by more than 35,000 Egyptian volunteers working in coordination with the Egyptian Red Crescent. We have received 18,560 injured Palestinians and their companions for treatment in 172 hospitals nationwide.

Simultaneously, we are working around the clock to host an international conference in Egypt to address early recovery and reconstruction in Gaza once a ceasefire is reached. It will be based on a three-phased plan endorsed by the Arab Summit in March. The plan will rebuild Gaza while ensuring that Palestinians remain in their homeland, casting away any contemplation of displacement. Over the past few months, we have received an outpour of worldwide support for the conference, which will be critical to restoring normalcy to Gaza.

Egypt has pursued a dual track: committing to achieve a ceasefire through mediation efforts, and working toward an uninterrupted delivery of humanitarian assistance to Palestinians in Gaza and reconstruction.

At this decisive moment, the responsibility before us is clear. The ceasefire proposal offers a reasonable path forward. Egypt will continue to work tirelessly with regional and international partners to support these efforts, guided by our unwavering commitment to peace, stability, and justice in the Middle East. The choices made today will shape the imminent future of the region. It is imperative that all parties rise to the occasion and shoulder their responsibility.

ISRAELI ANNEXATION OF WEST BANK COULD SINK ABRAHAM ACCORDS, UAE WARNS

The path to coexistence requires vision, courage, and a steadfast commitment to ending the cycle of violence. President Donald Trump has played a defining role in advancing peace efforts across the world, in Europe between Azerbaijan and Armenia, and in Africa between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. His efforts to end the war in Ukraine are also pivotal to securing peace in Europe. But importantly, he was instrumental in achieving the initial Jan. 19 ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas.

Achieving peace in the Middle East would stand as the crown jewel of these endeavors, reflecting his advocacy for peace and lasting solutions in turbulent regions. His emphasis on strong partnerships and pragmatic diplomacy highlights the importance of decisive leadership in moments of crisis. Today, that same spirit is urgently needed to turn the tragedy in Gaza into an opportunity for reconciliation and recovery.

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