An End in Sight?: Washington's Gaza Peace Plan

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Ella Parkin and Suhaib Shaukat



3 Main Points

-Will the 20 point peace plan bring stability to the Middle East? -The peace deal represents a historic opening for de-escalation in the Israel–Palestine conflict. However, this opportunity is extremely fragile because the agreement's success depends on its implementation. -While the agreement offers a framework for stability and a possible end to decades of hostility, unclear execution mechanisms and mutual commitment means the peace deal risks becoming symbolic rather than transformative.

About the Authors

Ella Parkin and Suhaib Shaukat

Since October 7, 2023, more than 67,000 Palestinians have been killed. Despite numerous ceasefire efforts, none have held long enough to bring relief from Israel's relentless bombardment on Gaza. Now, US President Donald Trump says "war is over" as Washington brokers a 20–point peace plan between Israel and Hamas. Both sides agreed to a ceasefire on October 9, 2025 as the first phase of this plan. While the ceasefire has raised the hopes of the Palestinian people, its continuation depends on both parties' commitment to uphold it. This article examines the ceasefire attempts that preceded the current Gaza peace plan, unpacks the details of the new agreement, and explores how it is playing out on the ground so far.

1. Previous Proposals

Washington's Gaza peace plan is not the only proposal to attempt to end the war. Hope has been shattered many times before, with some ceasefires briefly enacted and broken, while others failing to take effect. In November 2023 and January 2025, agreements were reached between Israel and Hamas. The former agreement saw a pause in fighting, exchanges of Palestinian prisoners and Israeli hostages, and a flow of humanitarian aid into Gaza. While the initial deal started as a four-day truce, the ceasefire lasted eight days before ending on December 1, with the Israeli military reporting they "intercepted a launch from Gaza," and fighting resumed. The latter ceasefire saw a pause in hostilities for an initial six weeks, staggered over three phases. The first phase included a prisoner/hostage exchange and allowed Palestinians freedom of movement in the divided Gaza Strip. More Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners were exchanged in the second phases and an Israeli withdrawal from occupied territory was agreed upon. The final stage dealt with an exchange of deceased bodies from both sides and laid out a reconstruction plan for Gaza. The ceasefire remained in place for nearly 2 months until "pre-emptive" strikes were launched by the Israeli military after Hamas's "repeated refusal" to release Israeli hostages.

While these ceasefires were enacted before collapsing, others never made it beyond the negotiation table. Multiple UNSC resolutions calling for an immediate and lasting ceasefire in Gaza were put forward but were repeatedly vetoed by the US. Other UNSC resolutions, such as resolution 2735 (June 2024) and 2728 (March 2024), were passed but never implemented by both sides on the ground. Apart from these UN resolutions that failed to enforce ceasefires, other proposals were put forward but rejected by either side. For example, in April 2025, Israel outlined a six-week ceasefire in exchange for Hamas's disarmament but was rejected by the militant group, who pointed out the lack of Israeli withdrawal from Gaza or commitment to ending this war.

2. The Gaza Peace Plan

2.1 Ambiguity Surrounds the New Peace Deal

The new peace deal, facilitated by Donald Trump, Qatar, Egypt and Turkey, is a major step towards a possible permanent solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict, creating a stable Middle East region. Donald Trump's 20-point peace plan is a critical turning point for the region, as Israel and Hamas start implementing the first phase of the peace deal. Signing the deal was the easier part; the difficult part is implementing it. The deal was greatly welcomed by the regional powers, as there was no incentive for the war to continue. The Gaza peace deal signifies a change in Trump's administration on Gaza, as it has disposed of the controversial Gaza Rivera plan, which would have displaced the Palestinians. While the plan should be welcomed, several elements remain ambiguous and could be manipulated by Israel or Hamas to reignite conflict. A critical component is the creation of the Board of Peace, which would temporarily govern Gaza. Former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair is the leading candidate to head the board, although strong rumours persist, no official confirmation has been made. Some Arab states strongly oppose Blair's potential leadership due to his contentious history-supporting the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. The plan is similar to the "framework" that Trump's predecessor, Biden, had announced in May 2024. It also shares some of the elements from the Saudi French framework that they put out in July.

The peace deal has the danger of becoming a second Oslo Accords if it fails to deliver on critical points. The whole concept behind the Oslo Accords was to throw a plan on the wall and see if it works. The main line of contention is the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza. So far, Israel has pulled back from Gaza's major cities, but it still occupies 53% of the territory. The withdrawal from the rest of the Gaza Strip seems uncertain, as in the recent past, Israel has failed to keep its promises and has attacked Southern Lebanon despite the ceasefire. Another thorny issue in the deal is the disarmament of Hamas, which is critical in the implementation of the plan. Donald Trump has been very clear from the beginning that Hamas will have to disarm, and if it doesn't happen the US will disarm it violently. Hamas has governed the Gaza Strip for 20 years with full force. Since October 10, images have been emerging of Hamas reasserting its authority. A Hamas spokesperson recently stated that disarmament is out of the question, and even if they agree, there is no clear plan for how the disarmament would take place. There is a clear realisation among the Trump administration that, despite Hamas' violent past, it is set to play an integral part in the implementation of the deal. This is why Trump has been positive on the behaviour of Hamas post ceasefire, calling the group " wants to solve the problems and we gave them the approval for a period of time."

The other element that is vague in the plan is the operation plans of the international stabilisation force (ISF). The plan states that the US will work with the Arab and other international partners to develop ISF that would immediately be deployed in Gaza. The details of which nation will deploy its forces are very sketchy, and it still needs to be decided whether the force will

have the mandate from the United Nations (UN) or not. The recent decision of Israel's rejection of Turkey's armed forces' presence in Gaza under ISF is a clear indication that Israel wants to implement the peace plan under its own terms and conditions.

2.2 What's Been Happening so Far?

Since the inception of the ceasefire USA has been on its feet to prevent the collapse of the ceasefire due to the actions of Hamas and Israel. One critical point that has led to mistrust between the parties is the return of the hostage. Israel has accused Hamas of violating the ceasefire by sitting on the dead bodies of the deceased hostages. In response, Hamas has stated that it will take time to find the dead bodies due to the destruction caused. US officials have made it clear that it doesn't want to return to a fight; they sent JD Vance, Special Envoy Steve Witkoff, and Jared Kushner to Israel last week to discuss the ceasefire with Israel.

On the 19th of October, Israel conducted airstrikes in response to Hamas firing anti-tank missiles at Israeli soldiers. The clashes are the most serious escalation since the ceasefire, causing concern in the international community. In the response, the Israeli government ceased the delivery of essential humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip.

The peace deal marks a significant, though fragile, turning point in the Israel–Palestine conflict. While the agreement offers a framework for stability and a possible end to decades of hostility, its success ultimately depends on its implementation. The ambiguous clauses surrounding key issues—such as the withdrawal of Israeli forces, the disarmament of Hamas, and the operational structure of the International Stabilisation Force—pose major risks to its implementation. The growing mistrust between Israel and Hamas, evidenced by recent ceasefire violations and retaliatory strikes, underscores the volatility of the situation. If not managed carefully, the deal could follow the path of the Oslo Accords—well-intentioned but ultimately unsuccessful.