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What's in the draft Israel-Hamas ceasefire deal?

The three-phase plan is based on a framework US President Joe Biden laid in June 2024. What challenges does it face?

By: Explained Desk

New Delhi | Updated: January 14, 2025 19:21 IST



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Supporters of Israeli hostages block a road as they demand a deal during a protest amid ongoing negotiations for a ceasefire in Gaza, in Tel Aviv, Israel January 13, 2025. (REUTERS/Itai Ron)

Hamis agreed to a **draft ceasefire agreement** for the ongoing conflict in the Gaza Strip on Tuesday (January 14). An Israeli official told the *Associated Press* that progress was made but the details were being finalised. The Israeli Cabinet would also have to give its final approval to the plan, which could prove to be a roadblock.

The Palestinian militant group launched attacks on Israel in October 2023, leaving 1,200 people dead. It followed an Israeli military offensive in the Gaza Strip that has



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killed more than 64,000 people, according to a recent study published in *The Lancet*.

Several attempts for a ceasefire have been made since the conflict began, as death and destruction in Gaza have invited global condemnation. With President-elect Donald Trump set to take over from outgoing US President Joe Biden on January 20, efforts for a ceasefire had intensified of late. Trump recently said in a recent interview, "I understand... there's been a handshake and they are getting it finished - and maybe by the end of the week". Officials from the US, Qatar and Egypt have also played a role in the negotiations.

The AP obtained a copy of the draft deal. Here is what to know:

What the plan says

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The three-phase plan is based on a framework Biden laid in June 2024. The first phase would last for six weeks and include "a full and complete ceasefire", withdrawal of Israeli forces from all populated areas of Gaza, and release of 33 Israeli hostages taken by Hamas on October 7 — including women, the elderly the wounded — in exchange for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners.

Over the years, Israel has often arrested Palestinians over charges relating to association with Hamas, or for activities against the Israeli establishment.

By the end of the first phase, all civilian captives — living or dead — will have been released, AP reported. Biden said back then that Palestinian civilians would "return to their homes and neighborhoods in all areas of Gaza, including in the north", although, Israel's military action has led to the large-scale destruction of vast regions in Gaza. Humanitarian assistance would be sent, with 600 trucks going in daily.

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Details of the second phase would have to be negotiated during phase one. The *AP* report notes, “Those details remain difficult to resolve — and the deal does not include written guarantees that the ceasefire will continue until a deal is reached. That leaves the potential for Israel to resume its military campaign after the first phase ends.”

In this phase, “ Hamas would release the remaining living captives, mainly male soldiers, in exchange for more prisoners and the “complete withdrawal” of Israeli forces from Gaza, according to the draft agreement.”

Finally, in phase three, a major reconstruction plan for Gaza would commence and any final remains of hostages who have been killed would be returned to their families.

The challenges; why previous attempts at ceasefire failed

According to the *AP* report, Hamas has said it will not free the remaining hostages without an end to the war and a complete Israeli withdrawal.

In the past too, ceasefire deals have been enforced temporarily to allow limited humanitarian aid in Gaza. However, long-term plans have fallen apart over Hamas demanding Israel’s military withdrawal from the Gaza Strip – which Israel has refused – and Israel demanding the “destruction of Hamas” itself.

In fact, on Tuesday, far-right Israeli Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir threatened to quit the government if the deal was accepted, describing it as capitulating to Hamas. He similarly opposed the Biden proposal in 2024, along with Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich.



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In Israel, the war cabinet was brought together following the Hamas attack and consists of Netanyahu’s centre-right Likud Party, Ben-Gvir’s far-right Jewish National Front and some ultra-Orthodox Jewish leaders. For Netanyahu, this gave his political career an extension of sorts because many Israelis were dissatisfied

with him even before October 7. But keeping the coalition together could be difficult, in the face of a deal with Hamas.

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This article went live on January fourteenth, twenty twenty-five, at fourteen minutes past seven in the evening.

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