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## Israel halts aid to Gaza as ceasefire phase ends



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JERUSALEM – Israel has stopped the entry of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip following the expiration of the first phase of a ceasefire and prisoner exchange agreement.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s office announced Sunday that all aid deliveries would be suspended, citing Hamas’ refusal to extend the initial ceasefire phase. “If Hamas persists in its refusal, there will be additional consequences,” the statement warned.

Israeli Channel 14 reported that the decision was coordinated with the US. Far-right politician

Itamar Ben-Gvir welcomed the move, calling for a complete blockade of Gaza, including cutting off electricity and water supplies.

The initial six-week phase of the ceasefire, effective from Jan. 19, expired at midnight on Saturday.

Israel has yet to commit to the second phase, which includes a full withdrawal from Gaza and a permanent halt to hostilities. Hamas has rejected any further negotiations without Israel fulfilling its prior commitments.

Meanwhile, Israel reportedly agreed to a temporary ceasefire during Ramadan and Passover, following a proposal from US Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff.

The war in Gaza has claimed over 48,380 lives, mostly women and children, leaving the region devastated. Last November, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for

Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant over war crimes. Israel also faces a genocide case at the International Court of Justice.