
Over 120,000 Israelis sign petitions demanding ceasefire, hostage deal



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JERUSALEM, April 17 — More than 120,000 Israelis have signed 43 separate petitions calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and the release of hostages, according to data from the “Restart Israel” platform.

The petitions reflect growing dissent across Israeli society. Sixteen were signed by over 10,000 current and former military personnel, including members of elite units, reservists, and

intelligence officers. Another 27 petitions were backed by civilian professionals such as academics, artists, writers, engineers, and doctors.

High-profile signatories include former Prime Minister Ehud Barak, ex-Chief of Staff Dan Halutz, four former navy commanders, and numerous senior military figures, including Amram Mitzna, Amos Malka, and Avi Mizrahi. They collectively demand the release of 59 Israeli hostages, 24 of whom are believed to still be alive.

The movement gained momentum after the breakdown of a Qatari- and Egyptian-mediated ceasefire and prisoner exchange deal that began on Jan. 19. Though Hamas complied with phase one of the agreement, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government refused to advance to phase two, prompting the resumption of military operations on March 18.

In response to the petitions, Netanyahu lashed out at the signatories, calling them "anarchists" and threatening expulsion from military service for those inciting disobedience. He claimed foreign-backed efforts were trying to topple his government.

The war in Gaza has entered its second year. According to local health authorities, more than 51,000 Palestinians—mostly women and children—have been killed since October 2023. The International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants for Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, while Israel faces a separate genocide case at the International Court of

Justice.