

Israel, Hamas Set to Implement Ceasefire as Egypt Hosts Signing



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GAZA/JERUSALEM, Oct. 9— Israel and Hamas are preparing to implement a long-awaited Gaza ceasefire agreement, with an official signing ceremony expected later Thursday in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, following three days of intensive negotiations mediated by Egypt, Qatar, Türkiye, and the United States, according to Palestinian and Israeli sources.

Senior Hamas official Osama Hamdan told Qatar's Al Araby Television that the ceasefire will take effect immediately after approval by the Israeli government. The first phase of the accord includes Israel's withdrawal from Gaza City, Rafah, Khan Younis, and northern Gaza, and the reopening of five crossings for humanitarian aid under international supervision.

Hamdan added that drone operations over Gaza will halt during the prisoner exchange, which involves the release of 250 Palestinians serving life sentences and 1,700 other detainees.

Palestinian sources confirmed that Hamas has submitted prisoner lists "according to agreed criteria," pending final verification.

Hamas official Zaher Jabarin, head of the movement's Martyrs and Prisoners' Affairs Office, said the group has completed its obligations and will release the names once formal procedures conclude. Another Hamas source said the Rafah crossing will reopen later for medical evacuations and humanitarian transfers.

An Israeli official confirmed that the Security Cabinet will vote on the agreement at 5 p.m. local time (1400 GMT), followed by a full government session an hour later. The release of Israeli hostages is expected Sunday or Monday, the official added.

Israel's state broadcaster KAN reported that the army will begin a phased withdrawal within 24 hours of signing, while maintaining positions in parts of Gaza until all detainees are freed.

Earlier Thursday, U.S. President Donald Trump said the truce represents the “first phase” of his 20-point peace plan and hinted he may visit Israel on Sunday to observe its implementation.

The war, which erupted on Oct. 7, 2023, has left over 67,000 Palestinians dead and nearly 2 million displaced, devastating 80 percent of Gaza’s infrastructure, according to UN estimates.