

Gaza Ceasefire, October 2025

After almost exactly two years, what Amnesty International, Doctors Without Borders, the International Association of Genocide Scholars, and a UN Panel of Inquiry have all unequivocally described as a **genocide** has finally come to an end - or at least, reached a temporary pause.

Terms of the Ceasefire

The ceasefire announced on October 6, 2025, is being described in diplomatic circles as “fragile,” “precarious,” and “conditional.” But those descriptions only scratch the surface. The terms themselves lay bare the devastating asymmetry of power on the ground, the depth of suffering endured, and the degree to which basic international norms have been systematically violated for nearly two years.

Hostage Exchange

The most visible component of the ceasefire is a prisoner and detainee exchange: **Hamas is to release the remaining 20 Israeli hostages** in its custody - civilians and soldiers captured during or after the October 2023 escalation - in exchange for the release of **1,950 Palestinian detainees** held by Israel. These include **250 prisoners** and **1,700 individuals classified as administrative detainees** - people imprisoned without charge, trial, or conviction.

Administrative detention, long condemned by international legal observers, allows Israel to hold Palestinians indefinitely under military law. Many of those to be released have been detained **without access to legal representation**, often based on **secret evidence** withheld from both detainees and their lawyers. Others were convicted in **Israeli military courts**, which operate with an almost 100% conviction rate and have been criticized for violating minimum standards of due process under international law.

Perhaps most harrowing are the conditions under which these individuals have been held. Over the course of the war, and especially in the past year, credible reports have emerged from multiple human rights organizations documenting the **inhumane, degrading, and often violent treatment of Palestinian detainees** in Israeli prisons and detention sites. These include **starvation, denial of medical care, beatings, sexual humiliation, prolonged stress positions**, and in some cases, **rape**. Several detainees died in custody under suspicious circumstances. None of these allegations have been independently investigated by Israeli authorities.

This exchange, while a partial release, is more than a diplomatic gesture. It is a window into the mechanics of occupation, the systemic criminalization of Palestinian existence, and the normalization of indefinite detention without rights.

Humanitarian Aid: 600 Trucks a Day

Under the terms of the ceasefire, **Israel has agreed to permit the entry of 600 trucks of humanitarian aid per day into Gaza** - a number still far below pre-2023 war levels, but vastly more than what had been allowed in recent months. Before the ceasefire, some days saw fewer than 20 trucks entering, despite famine conditions and widespread disease.

This commitment, on paper, may sound like progress. But it is also a **silent admission** of guilt. For nearly two years, Israel systematically blocked aid to Gaza - food, water, medicine, fuel, and reconstruction materials - despite the catastrophic humanitarian situation. This obstruction violated **customary international humanitarian law**, particularly **Rule 55**, which mandates free passage of humanitarian relief to civilians in need. It also violated **Articles 55 and 59 of the Fourth Geneva Convention**, which require occupying powers to ensure the survival of civilian populations and to allow relief efforts when they are unable or unwilling to provide basic necessities.

Further still, in 2024, the **International Court of Justice issued provisional measures** ordering Israel to prevent acts of genocide and to allow humanitarian aid to flow freely. These measures were ignored.

Now, under pressure, Israel's acceptance of the aid terms does not represent generosity - it represents **compliance, long overdue**, with obligations it had unlawfully flouted. And even with the increase in trucks, **there is no guarantee** of unimpeded access, safety for aid workers, or equitable distribution in a region where over 80% of the population is displaced, many living without shelter or sanitation.

Military Repositioning: Gaza Shrunk by 53%

The third pillar of the ceasefire agreement concerns the repositioning of Israeli military forces. The **Israel Defense Forces (IDF) will withdraw to a so-called "yellow line,"** a temporary boundary that leaves **53% of Gaza under continued direct Israeli military occupation**. This effectively shrinks the functional, inhabitable territory of Gaza to **47% of its original area** - a reality with massive implications.

The move formalizes what many observers have already warned: that this war was not only punitive, but territorial. Despite official Israeli denials of reoccupation, the ceasefire map tells a different story. What remains under Israeli control includes major road corridors, strategic water and energy infrastructure, agricultural land, and much of Gaza's northern region - now rendered unlivable.

In essence, **Gaza has been severed**, not only by rubble and displacement, but by military partition. More than one million people are now crammed into a sliver of southern Gaza, displaced multiple times over, cut off from homes they may never return to. The ceasefire, then, does not reverse the occupation - it **entrenches it**.

A Ceasefire Built on Ashes

These are the terms. Brutal, asymmetric, and born not out of mutual agreement but out of desperation, pressure, and overwhelming global condemnation.

There is no justice embedded in these terms - only survival. No accountability yet - only pause. And the very language of “ceasefire” obscures the conditions under which this agreement was made: the rubble of a devastated territory, the trauma of a targeted population, and the systematic stripping away of legal norms and human dignity.

What comes next - politically, legally, morally - will depend on whether the world treats this ceasefire as an end, or as an opening.

A Troubling History

There is hope in every ceasefire. A hope that the guns will stay silent, that civilians can finally return home, that children can sleep without fear of waking up under rubble. But history - particularly Israel’s history with ceasefires - tempers that hope with realism.

Israel has a long, well-documented pattern of **violating or undermining ceasefires** - sometimes within hours, often through calculated military actions framed as “pre-emptive” or “defensive.” While ceasefire breaches are not unique to one side in a conflict, the record is clear: **Israel has repeatedly broken agreements it either signed or helped broker**, especially when military or political expediency dictated it.

A Timeline of Broken Ceasefires

Year	Parties / Broker	Core Terms	Collapse or Violation
1949	<i>Arab–Israeli Armistice (UN)</i>	End of hostilities; demilitarized zones	Israeli incursions into Syrian DMZ reignited clashes.
1982	<i>U.S.-brokered Lebanon ceasefire</i>	PLO withdrawal; U.S. civilian guarantees	Sabra & Shatila massacre (2,000–3,500 dead) after Israeli-enabled Phalangist entry.
2008	<i>Egypt-mediated Hamas–Israel truce</i>	Mutual calm; ease blockade	Broken on 4 Nov 2008 by IDF raid into Gaza tunnel; conflict escalated immediately.
2012	<i>Egypt-brokered ceasefire (Pillar of Defense)</i>	Halt attacks; ease siege	Blockade remained; periodic violations resumed within months.
2014	<i>Humanitarian truces during Gaza war</i>	Daily ceasefires	Collapsed within hours; attacks resumed on both sides.
2021	<i>Post-“Guardian of the Walls” ceasefire</i>	Egypt / U.S. mediated	Israeli airstrikes resumed weeks later.
Nov 2023	<i>Temporary Gaza truce</i>	Hostage–prisoner exchange	Expired 1 Dec 2023; bombardment resumed the next day.
Nov 2024	<i>Israel–Hezbollah ceasefire</i>	U.S.-brokered 13-point deal	Israeli airstrikes in southern Lebanon persisted through 2025.

Year	Parties / Broker	Core Terms	Collapse or Violation
Mid-2025	<i>Israel-Syria de-escalation</i>	Local truce in southern Syria	Despite the truce, Israeli strikes continued in Damascus and Suwayda.
Oct 2025	<i>Current Gaza ceasefire</i>	Three-phase U.S. framework	Implementation uncertain; large parts of Gaza remain occupied and aid limited.

Patterns of Breach

In nearly every case, the collapse of a ceasefire has been followed by a **narrative of justification**: a threat neutralized, a tunnel destroyed, a rocket intercepted. These justifications rarely withstand scrutiny and often appear **strategically timed** to coincide with domestic political shifts or international events. The **November 2008 ceasefire**, for instance, was broken by an Israeli raid just as U.S. elections concluded - possibly to preempt anticipated shifts in American foreign policy. The **2023 ceasefire** collapsed the moment its short-term utility was exhausted.

Even in agreements explicitly focused on humanitarian protection - like the **2014 and 2021 truces** - Israeli operations resumed with little regard for the civilian population's right to safety and rest.

The **2025 ceasefire**, while touted as more comprehensive, is already showing signs of structural weakness. **Aid is still being restricted**, movement within Gaza remains tightly controlled, and **IDF ground troops have not fully withdrawn** from large swaths of the strip. Israeli leaders have publicly referred to this ceasefire as a "tactical pause," not a step toward peace - language that betrays the temporary, expendable nature of the arrangement.

International Law, Selective Compliance

Israel's ability to violate ceasefires with near-total impunity is enabled by the **lack of meaningful accountability** from the international community. While ceasefire agreements are often brokered with language rooted in international law, enforcement is rare. UN condemnations are vetoed. ICC investigations are delayed or stonewalled. And Western states with influence - particularly the United States - have historically shielded Israel from consequences.

This pattern erodes not only Palestinian trust in ceasefires but also the credibility of international law itself. When violations become routine and go unpunished, ceasefires become less about peace and more about **strategic recalibration** - temporary resets before the next offensive.

Echoes of Sabra and Shatila

The terms of the October 2025 ceasefire are far from comprehensive. While they address immediate issues - such as the exchange of hostages, limited humanitarian access, and partial military repositioning - they also leave ominous gaps. Among the most unsettling is

the **unresolved demand** for Hamas fighters to **disarm or leave Gaza** in future negotiation phases.

On paper, this may appear to be a step toward “demilitarization.” But in practice, it carries chilling historical weight - a weight that echoes **Beirut, 1982**.

In the summer of that year, during Israel’s invasion of Lebanon, a **U.S.-brokered ceasefire** was reached between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The core promise: **PLO fighters would leave West Beirut**, and in return, **civilians in Palestinian refugee camps would be guaranteed safety**. Under U.S. assurances, international forces arrived to oversee the PLO withdrawal. But by September, those forces departed - prematurely and without fulfilling their full mandate.

What followed remains one of the darkest stains on modern Middle Eastern history.

In September 1982, **Israeli troops surrounded the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps** in West Beirut. Then, over the course of **three days**, Israeli commanders **allowed Lebanese Christian Phalangist militias to enter the camps**. The militias, driven by sectarian revenge and emboldened by impunity, **massacred between 2,000 and 3,500 Palestinian and Lebanese civilians** - the vast majority women, children, and elderly men. The world watched in horror as the bodies piled up.

Israel’s own **Kahan Commission**, convened in 1983 under public pressure, concluded that the **Israeli Defense Forces bore indirect responsibility** for the massacre. Ariel Sharon, then Defense Minister, was found to have “personal responsibility” for failing to prevent the bloodshed. He resigned from his post but remained a powerful figure in Israeli politics. The **UN General Assembly** went further, calling the massacre **an act of genocide** - a term that would reverberate for decades.

The shadow of Sabra and Shatila looms large over Gaza today. The **current ceasefire’s implicit suggestion** - that fighters must leave in exchange for civilian protection - **mirrors the false assurances of 1982**. Then, as now, the withdrawal of armed resistance is portrayed as a path to peace. But history has shown that **when resistance leaves and international observers exit, the people left behind are the ones who suffer most**.

The risk is not theoretical. In northern Gaza, nearly emptied of civilians and declared a “safe zone,” mass graves have already been discovered. Aid workers and journalists have documented signs of **execution-style killings**, signs of **torture**, and in some cases, **entire families buried under collapsed buildings where no rescue was ever permitted**. These are not isolated incidents - they are potential precursors.

If future phases of the ceasefire include **Hamas withdrawal or disarmament without robust international protection**, history warns us exactly what can happen next.

The Sabra and Shatila massacre is not just a distant tragedy. It is a **precedent** - a blueprint for what can unfold when military forces exploit power vacuums, when civilians are stripped of protection, and when the world turns its back after declaring “mission accomplished.”

Echoes from Beirut in 1982 are now sounding in Gaza in 2025. The question is whether anyone is truly listening - and whether this time, the outcome can be prevented.

Dissonance in Israeli Media

As international headlines heralded the October 2025 ceasefire as a long-awaited breakthrough, **a very different narrative took hold inside Israel** - especially in the Hebrew-language media. While foreign correspondents spoke of diplomacy, de-escalation, and humanitarian openings, most Israeli outlets **avoided using the word “ceasefire” at all**.

Instead, the dominant framing was narrower, more transactional: **a hostage exchange deal**, not a political or military de-escalation. The distinction is not just semantic. It reflects a deeper ideological and strategic dissonance - between how the war is perceived outside Israel's borders, and how it is being framed, defended, and possibly prolonged within them.

Managing Perception: Ceasefire vs. Capitulation

Within Israel, announcing a “ceasefire” would imply **an end to active military operations**, a pause in bombing, and potentially - unthinkable to some - a **concession to Hamas**. For over two years, the Israeli government, military, and media ecosystem have told the public that **total victory** in Gaza was the only acceptable outcome. The declared goals were the **complete destruction of Hamas**, the **permanent demilitarization of Gaza**, and, in the words of several ministers, the **“voluntary transfer” or “removal” of Gaza's population**.

To now acknowledge a ceasefire is to contradict that narrative. It forces the public to confront the reality that **the war has not ended in total victory** - that despite overwhelming military force, **Hamas remains partially intact**, **Gaza remains partially standing**, and most importantly, **Palestinians remain**.

By framing the agreement purely as a **hostage exchange**, Israeli officials and media outlets maintain a posture of strategic strength. It allows them to tell the public that **this is not peace, not compromise - just a tactical move** to bring Israeli captives home.

Contradictions with Previous Rhetoric

This rhetorical dissonance is particularly stark when contrasted with statements made by prominent Israeli figures during the war. Multiple government ministers, coalition members, and influential pundits made **open calls for the ethnic cleansing of Gaza**. In Knesset speeches, social media posts, and op-eds, the future of Gaza was described not in terms of reconstruction, but **redevelopment** - as **“prime beachfront real estate”** ripe for Israeli settlements once the population was removed.

Some openly fantasized about “Gaza without Gazans,” a project that would entail mass displacement, permanent occupation, and the erasure of Palestinian life and history from the coastal enclave. These were not fringe voices. They came from inside the ruling coalition,

echoed across television panels, and were often left unchallenged in mainstream discourse.

To now speak of “ceasefire” or “negotiation” would be to **publicly retreat from those maximalist visions** - to admit that a return to political reality may be unavoidable. That is a step few leaders have been willing to take.

Is This a Strategic Pause - or a Shift in Policy?

The central question, then, is whether the ceasefire signals a **genuine reversal of course**, or simply a **temporary pause** - a tactical lull meant to retrieve hostages and regroup before resuming military operations.

Several indicators suggest the latter. In public statements, Israeli Prime Minister and Defense officials have repeatedly emphasized that the ceasefire is **“conditional and reversible.”** The language remains combative: **“We will return to Gaza if Hamas violates the deal”**, or **“This is not the end of the campaign.”** Military spokespeople continue to describe northern Gaza as a “closed combat zone,” and IDF troop rotations remain active in areas designated for withdrawal.

Inside the Israeli public sphere, the absence of meaningful reflection on the war’s civilian toll, the legal implications of the occupation, or the long-term political future of Gaza suggests that **this is not yet a moment of reckoning** - but one of recalibration.

Two Realities, One War

In international arenas, the ceasefire is being praised as a necessary step toward peace, a potential inflection point after unprecedented devastation. But inside Israel, the narrative remains frozen in an earlier phase: **war as necessity, Palestinians as threat, and peace as capitulation.**

This split-screen reality - of diplomacy abroad and denial at home - raises profound questions about what comes next. Can a ceasefire survive when half its signatories refuse to name it? Can hostages be exchanged without confronting the reasons they were taken in the first place? And most of all, **can the conditions for peace ever emerge when the dominant political project is still aimed at erasing the people on the other side of the border?**

Only time will tell whether Israeli leadership has truly changed course - or whether this ceasefire, like so many before it, is simply **a pause before the next round of destruction.**

To the People in Gaza

I hope. I wish. I pray the ceasefire will hold.

But I would not bet my life on it - and neither should you.

Reunite with your families. Celebrate, if you can. You've earned that much and more. But stay vigilant. Refill your caches of food and water. Make sure your children know where to go if things start again. Make sure you know.

Because if history has taught us anything, it's that these silences are often the eye of the storm - not the end of it.

If the borders open and you wish to leave, be ready. If you choose to stay, be prepared. The ceasefire could break tomorrow, next week, next month. You may be displaced again. You may have to run again.

And I say this not because I want it to be true - but because it might be. Because it has been before.

I would hate to see Israel win. I would hate to see them flatten the last pieces of your homes and your memories, to watch them erase your lives and call it "redevelopment." But your lives are worth more than any piece of land. **You** are worth more.

Do what you need to do to survive. Whatever survival looks like for you, do it.

Because Gaza is not just geography. It is not just sand and sea. Gaza is you. And as long as you live, Gaza lives.

Stay alive.

To the International Community

Do not turn away now. Do not declare peace and move on. Do not leave the Middle East - yet again - to Israel and the United States to do as they please.

The ceasefire in Gaza, as fragile and limited as it is, did not happen on its own. It was forced into existence by pressure - by protest, by outrage, by evidence too overwhelming to ignore. That pressure must not let up. Not until there is justice.

Keep your eyes on Gaza.

Keep your ears on Palestine.

The occupation is not over. Israeli soldiers still control Gaza's north, its borders, its airspace, its aid, its population registry. The West Bank remains under siege. Settlements continue to expand. Checkpoints still choke daily life. Administrative detention continues without trial, without due process. And the machinery of apartheid remains intact.

Do not let this ceasefire become an excuse to go quiet. Do not let governments celebrate diplomacy while continuing to arm one side of the occupation.

Keep up the pressure - on every front.

- **Until Israel ends its occupation of Gaza and the West Bank**, as ordered by the **International Court of Justice**, and reaffirmed again and again by **UN resolutions**.

- **Until all Palestinian hostages - those held without trial, without charges, without rights - are released.**
- **Until the two-state solution is not just a slogan**, but a real, enforceable reality grounded in borders, rights, and sovereignty.
- **Until Israeli leaders - and Israel itself - are brought before the law**, held accountable in the **International Criminal Court** and **International Court of Justice**, like any other state that has committed grave crimes.

There cannot be peace without justice. There cannot be justice without accountability. And there will be neither if the world stops watching now.

The people of Gaza are not a news cycle. They are not a cause to be picked up and dropped. They are living through the consequences of international silence, impunity, and selective outrage.

Let that silence end here.

Conclusion – A Pause or an End?

This ceasefire may feel like an ending. The bombs have stopped - for now. The headlines are shifting. Aid is beginning to trickle in. Some families have found each other again. Some children have slept through the night.

But for Gaza, for Palestine, this is not the end. It is a pause. A fragile, temporary moment suspended between survival and the possibility of renewed violence.

Too much remains unresolved. Too many lies still hang in the air: that the occupation doesn't exist, that Gaza was ever "liberated," that the death of thousands of civilians is somehow self-defense. The world watched the horror unfold in real time - watched hospitals destroyed, journalists killed, entire neighborhoods wiped out - and still struggled to name it for what it was.

But names matter. History matters. And the truth is this: what happened in Gaza over the past two years was not a war between equals. It was not a "conflict." It was a **systematic, sustained campaign** against a trapped civilian population, and **it was called genocide** - not just by activists, but by **doctors, scholars, UN investigators**, and the **International Court of Justice**.

This ceasefire, while necessary, is not a solution. It does not undo what's been done. It does not bring back the dead. It does not end the blockade. It does not restore homes, or safety, or sovereignty. It does not free Palestine.

The only way forward is through **justice** - real, international, enforceable justice. That means trials. That means reparations. That means an end to occupation, not just in words but in action. It means political will, and political risk, from a world that has for too long enabled Israeli impunity.

If this moment becomes a turning point, it will not be because leaders suddenly chose morality. It will be because people - **millions of people** - around the world refused to stop watching. Refused to stop shouting. Refused to accept silence as peace.

The ceasefire of October 2025 may one day be remembered as the start of something. Or it may be remembered as another lull before another massacre.

The choice - this time - is not only Israel's. It belongs to all of us.