

# [***Egyptian delegation arrives in Israel to revive deadlocked ceasefire and hostage talks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BWK-4VT1-DY7V-G015-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

(CNN) &#8212; An Egyptian delegation is in Israel in an effort to advance stalled negotiations aimed at releasing hostages and implementing a ceasefire in Gaza, Egyptian and Israeli officials told CNN on Friday.

The delegation is also set to continue discussions with Israeli officials on security coordination around a potential Israeli operation in Rafah, another Israeli official said. Egypt is concerned about the implications of a full-scale Israeli operation in Rafah, close to its border, where around a million displaced Palestinians have taken shelter in recent months.

Despite months of talks mediated by Qatar and Egypt, Hamas and Israel have failed to reach an agreement over differences on key demands.

A senior US administration official said on Thursday that there are "some indications of an avenue" to broker a deal.

The latest framework presented over several rounds of talks in Qatar and Egypt includes a six-week ceasefire and the release of some hostages held by Hamas in exchange for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.

One key demand by Hamas is the "unrestricted" return of displaced Palestinians from the south of Gaza to the north.

The US official confirmed that the draft agreement included that element, but "there are provisions" for ensuring the safety of those returning.

"That means shelter, that means assistance. That means a UN mission to make sure things are ready," the official said.

Hamas said Saturday it had received a response from Israel over its position on the ceasefire talks.

"The movement will study this proposal, and upon completion of its study, it will submit its response," it said in a statement.

Demand for complete Israeli withdrawal

In an interview with Al Jazeera, senior Hamas official Khalil Al-Hayya reiterated other key demands - previously rejected by Israel - as key conditions for any agreement.

He said that Hamas "cannot strike a deal" without a guarantee that there will be a permanent ceasefire and a complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza.

"Despite the catastrophe (in Gaza)... it is not possible for us to release (the hostages) for a poor exchange, which could then lead to a restart of an (Israeli) assault or war on our people," he said.

Israel has maintained that its operation in Gaza will continue until Hamas is eliminated.

As talks drag on, the death toll in Gaza continues to rise, and hostage families in Israel grow desperate to bring their loved ones home. Qatar, a key mediator, this week questioned the seriousness of Israel and Hamas about reaching a deal.

Another sticking point in the negotiations is the number of Israeli hostages set for release in the first phase of the agreement. After initially agreeing on 40 hostages, including all the women, as well as sick and elderly men, Hamas indicated that it does not have enough living hostages who match those criteria for release, [*according to*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/10/middleeast/hamas-israel-hostages-ceasefire-talks-intl/index.html) another Israeli official and a source familiar with the discussions.

In a rare joint statement Thursday, leaders from 18 countries, including the United States, urged Hamas to accept the terms of a deal and to release the hostages, which "would bring an immediate and prolonged ceasefire in Gaza that would facilitate a surge of additional necessary humanitarian assistance to be delivered throughout Gaza and lead to credible end of hostilities."

"A lot of times we hear things from leaders of Hamas outside (of Gaza)that do not reflect the Hamas leadership inside, which seems determined to simply sit underground holding hostages," the senior US administration official said.

A senior Hamas official criticized the statement as a show of "ironic international ***politics***" and called for the signatory countries to put pressure on Israel to accept a deal.

"Their sons and daughters are not more precious than our sons and daughters," the official, Basem Naim, said in a statement.

Meanwhile, Israeli demonstrators joined families of the hostages in a protest in Tel Aviv on Thursday, a day after Hamas released a video of Israeli-American hostage [*Hersh Goldberg-Polin*](https://www.cnn.com/middleeast/live-news/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news-01-19-24/h_7435972c8863abb6e4cb60ea83608049), who was kidnapped during Hamas' attacks on Israel on October 7.

"We really hope that seeing him and hearing his voice serves as a very stark reminder to all of the negotiators that you are negotiating over the lives of real people," Goldberg-Polin's parents said in a video statement.

In Gaza, aid has slowly trickled in, but aid agencies say it's nowhere near enough to provide adequate relief for destitute Palestinians, and frustration continues over the sluggish response to the catastrophe, caused by Israel's offensive and its siege on the strip.

"People need food assistance every day and we're able to take in trucks every day but not enough," Matthew Hollingworth from the World Food Programme said.

CNN's Zeena Saifi contributed to this report.

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