



[Biden Criticizes Netanyahu for Not Doing Enough to Secure a Gaza Ceasefire Deal](#)

Talks regarding bringing about a ceasefire deal in Gaza remain underway, with this past weekend's news that the bodies of six hostages were recovered – including one dual Israeli-American citizen – putting increased pressure on officials to reach an agreement to secure the remaining hostages and halt the devastating war which has left Gaza in ruins and killed tens of thousands of Palestinian civilians, an alarming number of whom have been children. The White House and the U.S. negotiation team is seeking to finalize a proposal with the involvement of fellow mediators Qatar and Egypt. When asked if a new deal would be presented in the coming days, U.S. President Biden replied “We’re very close to that,” however, when asked if Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu is doing enough, he bluntly and forcefully said only one word: “No.” This of course refers to the evident frustration that many feel Netanyahu is purposefully preventing a final deal from being instituted under the guise of a demand that Israel maintain its military forces in Gaza. The growing dissatisfaction has also seen a record number of protesters take to the streets in Tel Aviv to demand action from Netanyahu in agreeing to a deal. A mother of one of the remaining hostages was recently quoted as saying that “Each passing day is like a Russian roulette that Netanyahu is playing.”

Back in late May, a three-phase proposal was unveiled by President Biden which would have started with a six-week ceasefire that would see Israel withdraw its forces from the more populated areas of Gaza, followed by an initial release of hostages, and then negotiation to implement a lasting ceasefire to include the withdrawal of all Israeli forces, the release of remaining hostages and Palestinian prisoners, and post-war reconstruction. Hamas is believed to have accepted this framework to move forward, yet Netanyahu ultimately stated that Israel would not accept a ceasefire deal which put an end to the war and that a permanent ceasefire was a “nonstarter.” Israeli officials have been accused of adding new demands and derailing the negotiation process, prompting some to ask why it seems like Netanyahu is trying to rewrite a deal that seems acceptable to the parties involved? To answer this, observers point to his personal and strategic motives to keep the war going and remain in power. Currently, Netanyahu is being kept in power with the backing of far-right parties that threaten to withdraw their support if the war doesn't end on their terms, which includes not releasing any Palestinian prisoners and keeping an Israeli military presence in Gaza post-war. Losing the support of these political parties would almost certainly lead to Netanyahu's coalition collapsing, and therefore, him being ousted from his position as prime minister. Notably, Netanyahu is also under major criminal corruption charges, which gives him personal motivation to stay in power and keep the war going so as to delay action against him.

Regarding what Netanyahu is defiantly seeking in Gaza, he is first calling for Israeli control over the Gaza border with Egypt, which Israel calls The Philadelphi corridor. Netanyahu insists on the IDF not leaving it, claiming that Hamas uses it to resupply arms, however Egypt completely rejects this, saying that it has taken actions to secure its side of the border and that an IDF presence would go against the 1979 Egypt–Israel peace treaty. To Egypt and others, IDF forces here would threaten peace and risk destabilizing the region. The second area where Netanyahu seeks a post-war Israeli presence is along the Netzarim Corridor – a road which Israel has used to break Gaza into a northern and southern half, giving it sole control over movement between. If Israel is allowed to maintain the Netzarim Corridor, it will enable control over the movement of Palestinians back north to their homes post-fighting. Thus, for Palestinian civilians who only wish to return to their home areas in the north of Gaza, this would

mean having to wait in long queues and be subjected to search, interrogation, and arbitrary arrest at the hands of IDF forces.

According to numerous sources, it is Netanyahu's insistence on maintaining a military presence in Gaza that is holding up any potential ceasefire deal. This is at odds with President Biden, Egypt, Hamas, and many in Israel who are calling on the prime minister to agree to end the fighting in exchange for the remaining hostages. Saudi Arabia and the Palestinian Authority joined Egypt in rejecting an Israeli position along the Philadelphi corridor. Some of the latest defiance from Netanyahu came during a recent press conference held on September 3rd in which he ruled out any withdrawal from the corridor. Importantly, another problematic element is that Israel has given no timetable on when it would withdraw from the Philadelphi corridor, only when "it feels safe." This has led many analysts to rightly view this as a cynical means of trying to justify long-term Israeli military presence in Gaza, just in the same way that Netanyahu has claimed "total victory" is necessary – a notion which experts have dismissed as unattainable and a ploy to try and indefinitely prolong the war.

The serious question remains whether or not negotiators from the United States, Qatar, and Egypt can present a proposal that would be agreed upon by both Hamas and Israel – something that looks to be incredibly challenging. While the parties seek to address gaps, it is becoming more apparent that Netanyahu's alleged concerns are tied to his strong political and personal motives. Since the onset of the Gaza War, regional tensions have escalated with rising violence in the West Bank, along the Israel-Lebanon border, and in the Red Sea. A continued failure to initiate a Gaza ceasefire agreement would leave the region at risk of all-out war, as the ongoing and longstanding conflict there has fueled the rise in tensions. As such, the White House and other mediating parties involved view a ceasefire deal as essential to quelling the current state of affairs.