



[Israel Accelerates Its Indiscriminate Killing of Civilians in Gaza After the Release of Edan Alexander](#)

The release of hostage soldier Edan Alexander as a result of U.S. officials' direct negotiations with Hamas was a notable development this week in several ways. Most importantly, it was hoped that it would spark renewed momentum regarding the prospects of initiating a ceasefire and putting an end to Israel's destructive war in Gaza, with the aim that it would serve as a significant and positive step forward in this process. For many observers, it was also proof though of the growing rift between the Trump administration and the Israeli government under Netanyahu. It speaks volumes about the United States' increased willingness to act independently – and in many cases privately – without coordination with Israel, in its dealings in the Middle East. Evidence of this was on full display last week as well when Trump announced a ceasefire deal with the Houthis, catching Israeli officials completely off guard. Trump officials, and even the president himself, have voiced disagreement behind the scenes regarding Israel's detrimental desire to expand its war efforts in Gaza and are becoming frustrated with their refusal to reach a new ceasefire and hostage release deal. With the release of Alexander, Hamas is signaling that it is committed to reaching a comprehensive final agreement for a permanent ceasefire and end to the Gaza War, and thus, mounting the pressure on Israel to cease its military offensive and egregious blockade on humanitarian aid – including, crucially, from the Trump administration.

The extent of the friction between U.S. and Israeli officials has been exhibited by the Trump administration's recent actions sidelining Israel's interests, including its pursuit of nuclear diplomacy with Iran and direct talks with both Hamas and the Houthis. Netanyahu's positions have not only garnered rising disapproval from those within the current U.S. government like Trump's Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff – who recently told a group of former hostages and relatives of those still held in Gaza that Israel is drawing out a conflict that the United States wants to end – but they have also led to consistently high levels of opposition domestically, with many shedding light on his clear prolonging of the Gaza War for political reasons. There is widespread support inside Israel for ending the war in return for the release of all remaining hostages, as opinion polls show that more than two-thirds of citizens back a deal. Netanyahu has long been facing the fury of hostage families and their supporters, who see that he is refusing to put an end to hostilities for personal political considerations. While this has been apparent to these individuals in addition to various human rights and peace advocates for some time, things have now reached a point where more and more can no longer deny it as they come to the realization that the extension of the war serves no purpose other than to prevent the collapse of the current Israeli government.

The pivotal importance of the efforts to implement a new Gaza ceasefire are underscored by a recent United Nations-backed assessment which has stated that the enclave's population is at critical risk of famine and faces extreme levels of food insecurity. The latest report by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) – a scale that analyzes the nature and severity of food insecurity – found that after some improvements in humanitarian conditions had been made during the course of the approximately two-month Gaza ceasefire between January and March, the resumption of Israeli hostilities and the blockade on aid since early March has reversed this and resulted in an estimated 93% of Gaza's population currently experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity. There has been overwhelming global condemnation of Israel's blockade, with humanitarian aid agencies outlining that it amounts to a war crime and a policy of starvation. The IPC also joined the chorus of entities that have denounced Israel's recent aid distribution takeover plan as highly insufficient and problematic.

Despite hopes that developments earlier this week would provide momentum to Gaza ceasefire efforts, Israel has instead intensified its bombardment of Gaza following a brief pause in the midst of Edan Alexander's release, with strikes on schools, hospitals, and other shelters housing displaced families killing and wounding hundreds of civilians. The U.S.- Hamas deal to facilitate Alexander's release, which was mediated by Qatar and Egypt but without any involvement of Israel, demonstrates to many that the Netanyahu government's priorities lie with prolonging the war efforts rather than securing the release of the remaining hostages. Israel's actions in the aftermath of Alexander's release are proof of this and have solidified the belief that it will require ramped up pressure on Israel – from the United States in particular – in order to halt its heinous Gaza War.