

Israeli protesters interrupt Netanyahu's speech as Gaza truce talks resume



Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaks during a ceremony marking the Hebrew calendar anniversary of the Hamas attack on October 7 last year [Gil Cohen-Magen/AFP] Pressure is mounting on Netanyahu's administration to secure a deal for the release of the remaining captives held in Gaza.

Tel Aviv, October 28 (RHC)-- Israeli protesters have interrupted Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's speech during a memorial to remember the victims of the October 7 attack as the Gaza ceasefire talks restarted in Doha, Qatar.

Netanyahu stood motionless at a podium during the ceremony on Sunday as audience members in the crowd shouted, interrupting him for more than a minute, according to a live broadcast of the speech.

Some people shouted "Shame on you" and made a commotion, forcing Netanyahu to stop his speech shortly after it began. One of the protesters repeatedly shouted, "My father was killed".

According to a Times of Israel report, the commemoration was initially not meant to include speeches by bereaved family members, fearing they would criticise the Israeli government. But amid protests, the family members were allowed to deliver their speeches at the ceremony.

Public and diplomatic pressure has been mounting on Netanyahu's administration to do more to strike a deal for securing the release of captives still held in Gaza.

Israel's spy chief David Barnea is scheduled to head to Doha on Sunday for talks aimed at restarting negotiations towards reaching a Gaza hostage release deal. Families of the remaining captives, along with several Western leaders, have called on the Israeli government to broker an agreement after the killing of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar earlier this month.

Reporting from Doha, Al Jazeera's Osama bin Javaid said Sinwar's death has provided a new opportunity for ceasefire talks, but in reality, both "sides are digging their heels." "Hamas say removal of the leadership, does not take away what they've been fighting for, which in their words they say is "illegal occupation," Javaid noted.

Meanwhile, critics in Israel have accused Netanyahu of obstructing mediation for a truce and hostage-release deal to release the 97 captives still held by armed groups in Gaza. The Israeli military says 34 of them are dead.

Netanyahu has rejected ceasefire proposals, including one from the US administration in May, and approved the killing of Islamil Haniyeh, the Hamas leader engaged in negotiations, in Tehran. Hamas has been seeking an end to the war and withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza, which has been ravaged by more than a year of non-stop Israeli bombardment. More than 42,000 Palestinians have been killed since October 7, 2023.

Netanyahu's far-right administration has pushed for a military solution, as it has opened a new front after it launched a ground offensive in southern Lebanon against the armed group Hezbollah.

In a separate speech on Sunday, marking the Hebrew calendar anniversary of the Hamas attack, which on October 7 last triggered the ongoing war on Gaza, Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said military action by itself will not achieve the country's war aims, which include bringing home the captives.

"Not all objectives can be achieved through military operations alone... To realise our moral duty to bring our hostages home, we will have to make painful concessions," Gallant said.

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