

# *Hamas says three captives to be released according to timeline set out in truce*

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Hamas resistance fighters escort Israeli captive Or Levy off a stage before handing him over to a

**Red Cross team as people gather to watch in Deir el-Balah, central Gaza, on February 8, 2025.  
(AFP)**

Gaza City, February 13 (RHC)-- Hamas says it is committed to the release of captives held in Gaza according to a timeline set out in a ceasefire, days after fears arose that the truce would not hold following Israel's violation of the agreement.

In a statement released on Thursday, Hamas said it "confirms continuation in implementing the agreement in accordance with what was signed, including the exchange of prisoners according to the specified timetable."

Hamas spokesperson Abdul Latif al-Qanoua also confirmed to the Anadolu news agency that the group will release captives on Saturday if Israel adheres to the terms of the ceasefire.

"The [Israeli] occupation has violated the agreement multiple times, whether by preventing the return of displaced people or blocking the entry of humanitarian aid," he said. "If Israel does not adhere to the terms of the agreement, the prisoner exchange process will not take place."

A Palestinian source quoted by AFP news agency said on Thursday that mediators had obtained from Israel a "promise ... to put in place a humanitarian protocol starting from this morning" that would allow construction equipment and temporary housing into the devastated territory.

The Hamas statement added that talks being held this week in Cairo aimed at overcoming an impasse in implementing the deal had been "positive." Later on Thursday, Israel said Hamas must release three living captives on Saturday or Israel will return to war.

Hamas warned it would delay the next release of captives scheduled for Saturday due to Israel violating the truce by shooting Palestinians in Gaza and not allowing the agreed-upon number of tents, shelters and other vital aid to enter the besieged enclave.

Israel responded by saying that if Hamas failed to free captives according to the schedule, it would resume its genocidal war.

Since the ceasefire went into effect on January 19, Israeli forces have killed at least 92 Palestinians and wounded more than 800, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health.

A Hamas delegation arrived in Cairo on Wednesday to discuss the ceasefire with mediators Egypt and Qatar.

Egyptian state-linked media said heavy equipment and trucks carrying mobile homes were ready to enter Gaza from Egypt on Thursday. The AFP news agency shared images showing a row of bulldozers on the Egyptian side of the border.

However, Israel later said they would not be allowed to enter through the crossing.

"There is no entry of caravans or heavy equipment into the Gaza Strip, and there is no coordination for this," Omer Dostri, a spokesperson for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, wrote on X, adding: "No goods are allowed to enter the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing."

U.S. President Donald Trump had warned this week that "hell" would break loose if Hamas failed to release "all" the remaining captives by noon (10:00 GMT) on Saturday.

If fighting resumes, Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said: "The new Gaza war ... will not end without the defeat of Hamas and the release of all the hostages."

"It will also allow the realisation of U.S. President Trump's vision for Gaza," he added.

Trump, whose return to the White House has emboldened the Israeli far right, caused a global outcry over his proposal for the U.S. to take over and "own" the Gaza Strip and move its 2.3 million residents to Egypt or Jordan.

The Gaza truce, currently in its first phase, has seen Israeli captives released in small groups in exchange for Palestinians in Israeli custody.

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