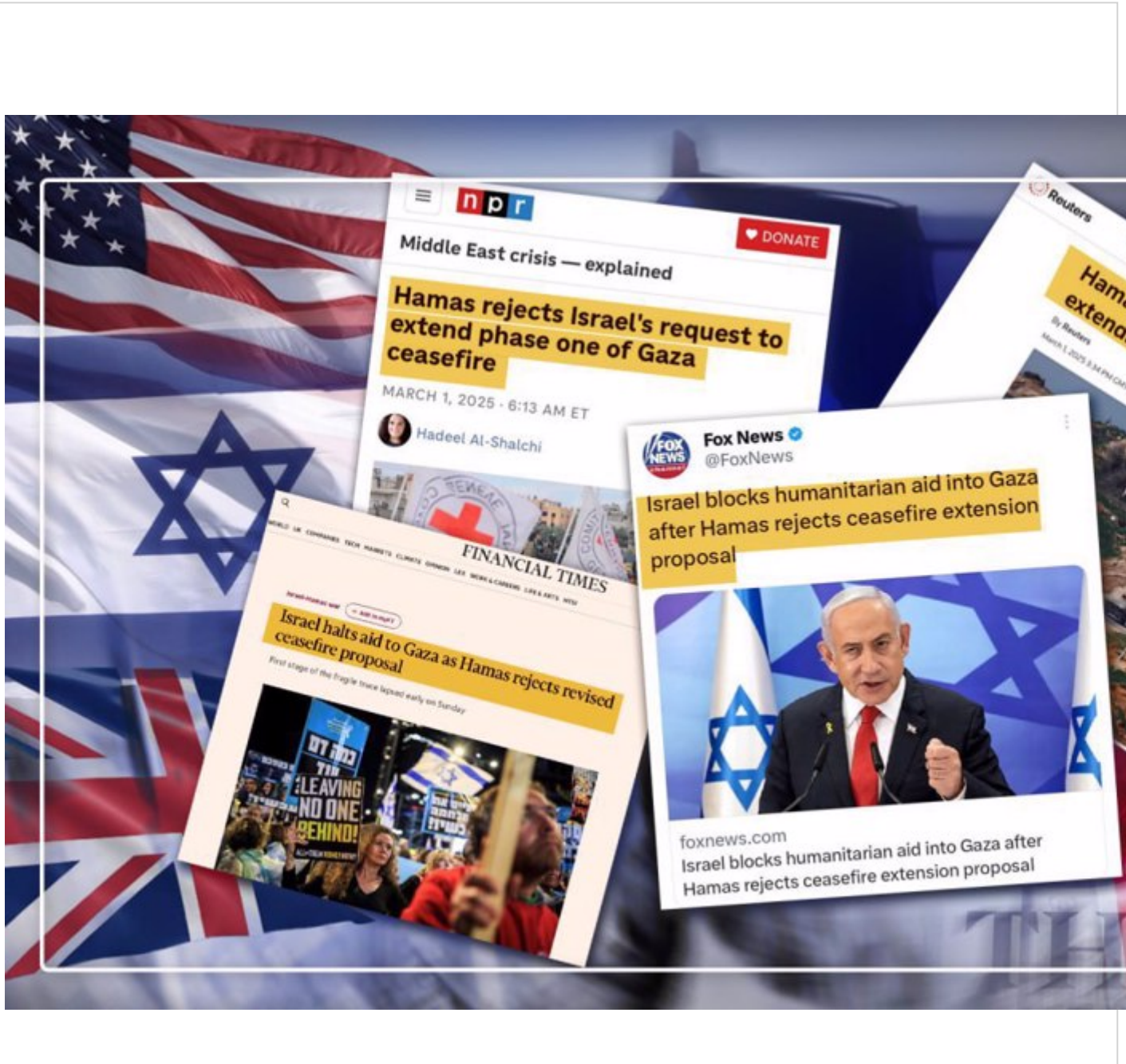


Western media is manufacturing consent for genocide by pinning truce breach on Hamas



By Maryam Qarehgozlou / PRESS TV

On Sunday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in a statement, abruptly declared the end of the ceasefire agreement beyond the first phase with the Gaza-based Hamas resistance movement, in brazen violation of the terms agreed upon by both sides.

He also announced the immediate suspension of all humanitarian aid to the besieged Palestinian territory's 2.3 million residents, sparking massive anger and outrage worldwide.

The plan, which Israel claims was proposed by U.S. special envoy Steve Witkoff, aims to pressure Hamas into accepting a revision of the ceasefire agreement, allowing for the release of more Israeli captives without the withdrawal of occupation forces from the Gaza Strip.

"With the end of phase one of the hostage deal, and in light of Hamas's refusal to accept the Witkoff outline for continuing talks – to which Israel agreed – Prime Minister Netanyahu has decided that, as of this morning, all entry of goods and supplies into the Gaza Strip will cease," read the statement.

"Israel will not allow a ceasefire without the release of our hostages. If Hamas continues its refusal, there will be further consequences," the statement added.

After the announcement, Netanyahu's spokesperson, Omer Dostri, stated in a social media post: "No trucks entered Gaza this morning, nor will they at this stage."

A statement from Hamas on Sunday condemned the suspension of humanitarian aid as a "war crime" and a blatant violation of the ceasefire agreement. The Gaza-based resistance movement said Netanyahu's "decision to suspend humanitarian aid is cheap blackmail, a war crime, and a blatant coup against the [ceasefire] agreement."

The resistance group reiterated its commitment to the original agreement, which included progressing into a second phase aimed at ending Israel's genocidal onslaught on the besieged Palestinian territory, which has continued unabated since October 2023.

Rejecting a temporary extension of the first phase, Hamas maintained that it would release the remaining Israeli captives only under the conditions outlined in the agreed-upon phased deal.

According to latest data, nearly 60 captives remain in Gaza, 24 of whom are still believed to be alive.

The negotiations for the phased truce deal between Israel and Hamas, which was intended to secure a permanent truce, facilitate the release of remaining captives, and ensure the withdrawal of Israeli occupation forces from Gaza, were held in Egypt late last month.

However, Israeli regime authorities, bolstered by the unwavering support of US President Donald Trump, signaled from the outset their intention to extend only the first phase of the agreement in exchange for additional captive releases, without advancing to subsequent phases.

"We said we are ready to extend the framework [of phase one] in return for the release of more hostages," Israel's Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said at a news conference on Thursday.

Israel was compelled to agree to a ceasefire deal with Hamas on January 15 after its key objectives, the release of captives and the dismantling of Hamas, remained unfulfilled, despite a 15-month-long genocidal war that killed 48,000 Palestinians, most of them children and women.

The 42-day initial phase of the ceasefire agreement, which involved the exchange of 33 Israeli captives (including 8 bodies of those killed in Israeli airstrikes) for approximately 1,900 Palestinian abductees held illegally in Israeli occupation jails, concluded on Saturday.

Prior to the ceasefire agreement, Israeli ministers such as Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich voiced strong opposition, viewing the deal as a defeat for the Zionist regime.

At the time, Smotrich threatened to “overthrow Netanyahu’s government,” while Ben-Gvir announced his party’s withdrawal from the ruling coalition following the Gaza ceasefire.

Nonetheless, Israel’s decision to cut aid to Gaza and its refusal to participate in the second phase of ceasefire deal signal the regime’s intent to escalate its genocidal war against Gaza, with speculation already rife that the stage is set for resumption of the aerial and ground assault.

It also suggests that the Netanyahu regime’s plan all along was to accept only the first phase of negotiations to secure the release of captives, according to regional observers.

According to journalist Jeremy Scahill, Israel publicly announced that Hamas had rejected the Witkoff proposal before the Palestinian resistance group had even been officially briefed on it by mediators and given a chance to respond.

“One small detail about today’s Gaza ceasefire developments: A senior Hamas official just told me that Israel publicly announced Hamas had rejected the so-called Witkoff proposal before Hamas had even been officially briefed on it by mediators and given its response,” he wrote in a post on X on Sunday.

How Western media distorted Gaza ceasefire narrative

As the Israeli regime continues to refuse engagement in the second phase of ceasefire negotiations for Gaza, resorting to the use of starvation as a weapon against Hamas, Western media remains complicit in manipulating public opinion to justify the regime’s genocidal actions in the war-torn besieged territory while blaming Hamas for “rejecting” an extension of the first phase.

Despite mounting evidence and reports from human rights organizations, Western media outlets have largely refrained from explicitly labeling Israel’s genocidal policies as war crimes.

Pro-Palestinian activists and international rights groups warn that Western media’s skewed reporting and calculated dissemination of biased narratives serve to weaken international pressure on Israel and exacerbate the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

The New York Times, the leading American daily with a history of peddling Israeli propaganda and falsehoods, continues to legitimize Israel’s use of hunger as a weapon against Palestinians by referring to it as “halting aid to Gaza.”

The Times’ refusal to use accurate terminology when reporting on Israel’s war crimes has been a consistent pattern throughout the regime’s war on Gaza, starkly contrasting with its coverage of Ukraine or other international conflicts.

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The New York Times has been the leading proponent of the fabricated “Hamas rape” narrative, which was later debunked. However, the newspaper has refused to issue a corrigendum or an apology for spreading falsehoods.

Now, after the Israeli regime backtracked on its commitment to the ceasefire deal, the Times and other mainstream Western media outlets are shamelessly blaming the party that has repeatedly expressed its readiness to adhere to the agreement and all its phases.

These outlets are placing the blame on Hamas for not accepting the extension of the first phase of the ceasefire agreement while simultaneously justifying Israel's use of starvation as a weapon against millions of Palestinians by halting the entry of aid.

This biased Western media coverage has normalized Israel's illegal and inhumane tactics of collective punishment, which constitute clear violations of international humanitarian law, as per observers.

Western media placed blame on Hamas for not accepting the extension of the first phase of the ceasefire agreement.

Assal Rad, a U.S.-based scholar in West Asian history and social media influencer, also highlighted the biased language used by Western media outlets in reporting on the ceasefire deal and its adherence by the two parties.

She pointed out that media headlines often focus on actions taken by Hamas, such as taking Israeli soldiers as captives, while failing to address Israeli genocidal war crimes.

"Have you ever seen a headline that says 'Hamas takes hostages to pressure Israel' or 'until Israel accepts' a specific objective? (Like an end to Israel's occupation)," she wrote in a post on Sunday.

"They focus on the hostage taking because it violates international laws and norms, but when Palestinian civilians are being collectively punished, starved, and killed, those same norms are secondary to Israel's objectives," she added.

Ramy Abdu, founder and chairman of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor, also condemned Western media bias for misrepresenting the parties responsible for the breakdown of the ceasefire agreement, thereby effectively supporting civilian starvation and genocide in Gaza.

"The party that violated the agreement, refused to move to the second phase, and seeks to resume war is Israel. Yet, Western media falsely claims Hamas refuses to extend the ceasefire," Abdu wrote.

Western media are misrepresenting the parties responsible for the ceasefire agreement's breakdown.

Writer and media critic Jonathan Cook, in a recent post on X, also criticized the portrayal of Hamas as the "rejectionist" party, pointing out that in reality, it is Israel and the U.S. that have violated the terms of the ceasefire agreement by refusing to enter the second phase of negotiations.

"Noam Chomsky calls it 'manufacturing consent': the establishment media spin events to misrepresent reality. Palestinians suffer from it more than anyone else," Cook wrote.

"Hamas is being presented as the 'rejectionist' party across the media. But it's Israel and the U.S. that violated the ceasefire agreement by refusing to negotiate the second phase, as promised."

Cook highlighted a tactic employed by the US, in which an "extension" of the first phase was offered to Hamas under unacceptable terms, leading to their refusal and subsequent blame.

"So the U.S. came up with a wheeze: let's offer Hamas an 'extension' of phase one on terms that are impossible for them to accept. When they say no, we'll say they rejected the offer. They'll get the blame," he stated.

"The spin works only because Western media are in the pocket of the billionaire class. Don't keep falling for their lies."

How Israel violated first phase of ceasefire deal

Throughout the first phase of the ceasefire agreement, the Israeli regime repeatedly violated the established terms by frequently attacking Palestinian civilians in different parts of Gaza.

An unnamed Israeli official stated on Thursday that Israel would not withdraw from the Philadelphi Corridor, a stretch of land it occupies along the Gaza-Egypt border, despite this being a key stipulation in the initial agreement agreed upon by the two sides.

Satellite images from the previous month confirmed that the Israeli military had initiated new illegal construction projects around the border region.

The Government Media Office (GMO) of Gaza reported over 350 Israeli violations since the ceasefire began, many of them resulting in killings of Palestinians, including children.

These violations included military incursions, gunfire, airstrikes, heightened surveillance, and the obstruction of crucial humanitarian aid.

According to the GMO, hundreds of Palestinians have been killed or injured by Israeli forces through airstrikes and shootings despite the ceasefire in place.

The GMO had also previously raised concerns over delays in allowing displaced families to return to their homes in northern Gaza, as well as significant shortfalls in the agreed-upon levels of aid and emergency relief designated for the besieged territory.

Following the initiation of the ceasefire on January 19, Israel slightly loosened its restrictions on humanitarian assistance, allowing vital food, medicine, and shelter supplies to enter Gaza after more than 15 months of relentless bombardment.

However, the United Nations stressed that these supplies remained insufficient to address the “massive needs” of Palestinians and that distributing aid continued to be a challenge due to internal displacement and persistent Israeli restrictions.

The death toll from Israel’s devastating war on Gaza since October 7, 2023, has risen to 48,397, the Gaza health ministry announced on Monday.

In a statement, the ministry reported that the figure includes five people who were killed by Israeli occupation forces and four bodies recovered from the rubble over the past 48 hours.

Additionally, 21 more injured Palestinians were transferred to hospitals, bringing the total number of injuries from the Israeli genocidal assault to 111,824.

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