

Israel's minister Ben-Gvir threatens to quit if ceasefire deal approved

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Israel's security minister Itamar Ben-Gvir holds a press conference together with members of his

far-right Otzma Yehudit party in al-Quds on January 16, 2025.

Tel Aviv, January 17 (RHC)-- Israel's far-right minister Itamar Ben-Gvir has threatened that he and his party colleagues would resign from the cabinet and collapse it if a Gaza ceasefire deal to end the Gaza carnage were approved.

"If this irresponsible agreement is approved and implemented, the Jewish Power party will not be part of the government and will leave it," he said at a news conference late Thursday.

Still, he kept open the possibility of reversing course if the deal aimed to end 15 months of Israel's genocide in Gaza collapsed. "If the war against Hamas resumes, with intensity, in order to achieve the objectives of the war that have not been achieved, we will return to the cabinet," he said.

Ben-Gvir sits on the Israeli cabinet alongside two fellow Jewish Power MPs. His party also holds six seats in the 120-seat parliament (the Knesset). The hardline minister also urged far-right finance minister Bezalel Smotrich to quit. Smotrich had already described the ceasefire deal as "dangerous" for the occupying regime.

The rising tensions in Netanyahu's coalition raised concerns about the implementation of the deal announced on Wednesday.

Netanyahu in a pre-dawn statement on Friday said a deal to release the captives had been reached and that he had ordered the political-security cabinet to convene later in the day. The announcement came after Israel delayed a vote on the deal on Thursday, with Netanyahu's office claiming that there was a last-minute dispute with Hamas.

The resistance movement denied the claims, with Izzat al-Rishq, a senior Hamas official, saying the group "is committed to the ceasefire agreement, which was announced by the mediators."

If approved by Israel's cabinet, the truce agreement would begin on Sunday and involve the exchange of Israeli captives for Palestinian prisoners, after which the terms of a permanent end to the war would be finalized.

The ceasefire, announced by Qatari Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani late on Wednesday, consists of three phases and would come into effect on Sunday over 42 days.

The truce deal stipulates that a large-scale prisoner exchange will occur, including the release of 1,000 prisoners from Gaza and hundreds of detainees serving lengthy sentences.

The first stage involves the release of 33 captives, including "children, women, female soldiers, men above 50, and the wounded and sick," as well as a gradual, partial withdrawal of invading Israeli units.

Israel launched its brutal Gaza onslaught on October 7, 2023, after Hamas-led resistance groups carried out a historic operation against the usurping entity in retaliation for its intensified atrocities against the Palestinian people.

Since October, the occupying regime has killed at least 46,788 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and injured nearly 110,450 others, in Gaza.

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