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Gaza's Ceasefire and the West Bank Under Siege A Fragile Pause or the Next Chapter of Oppression?

Introduction

After 15 months of relentless bombardment, mass displacement, large-scale atrocities and genocide in Gaza, a ceasefire was declared on January 19, 2025. However, this cessation of hostilities does not indicate an end to the Israeli occupation's aggression. Instead, it represents a strategic shift in focus, particularly toward the West Bank, where military repression and systemic human rights violations are intensifying (Middle East Eye, 2025). Rather than a pathway to peace, as claimed, the ceasefire has coincided with an escalation in occupation policies, reinforcing the cyclical nature of Israel's military strategy—where temporary uncertain lulls in one territory mean the transfer of the increased violence to the next.

Gaza remains in a state of humanitarian catastrophe, exacerbated by Israel's continued blockade and deliberate obstruction of aid (The Palestine Chronicle, 2025). The United Nations has described the situation as an "unrelenting tragedy," with over 47,000 Palestinians martyred—predominantly women and children—and over 111,000 wounded, while Gaza's decimated medical infrastructure is unable to accommodate the injured (Anadolu Agency, 2024). Entire neighborhoods have been erased, and survivors endure profound psychological trauma (The New Humanitarian, 2025). Meanwhile, Israeli occupation forces have intensified military raids, mass arbitrary arrests, and movement restrictions in the West Bank, closing 198 checkpoints and imposing collective punishment on Palestinian communities (Reuters, 2025).

The ceasefire was overshadowed by the inauguration of the Trump administration on January 20, 2025, signaling a likely resurgence of U.S. policies that provide diplomatic, financial, and military cover for Israeli actions. This shift further shields Israel from accountability for its ongoing war crimes (USIP, 2025). Historically, ceasefires have served as mere pauses in Israeli military operations, prolonging Palestinian suffering rather than paving the way for ending the occupation.

Unless the occupation is dismantled, the blockade is lifted, and Palestinian rights are internationally upheld, true justice and peace remain unattainable (PCHR; Al-Haq, 2025). Recent developments indicate that the Israeli occupation is shifting its military strategy, implementing increasingly repressive measures in the West Bank. This includes a targeted campaign to suppress and dismantle Palestinian resistance groups, particularly within refugee camps, where military incursions have intensified, leading to the forced displacement of more than 20,000 Palestinians (Wafa, 2025).



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The Gaza Ceasefire: Current Status and Future Prospects

The Cairo-mediated ceasefire, brokered with oversight from Qatar, Egypt, and the United Nations, outlined provisions for a cessation of Israeli military operations, the conditional opening of humanitarian aid corridors in the Gaza Strip, and an exchange agreement involving the release of a limited number of Palestinian detainees in exchange for Israeli captives (Middle East Eye, 2025). However, the fragile nature of this agreement is evident, as the occupying state of Israel has consistently obstructed aid deliveries and maintained its blockade (The Palestine Chronicle, 2025). Aid workers report that essential medical supplies and humanitarian goods remain stranded at border crossings, manipulated as political leverage by the occupying power. The detainee exchange process has also been marred by systemic injustices, as many of the Palestinian detainees included in the deal were mostly women and minors subjected to arbitrary detention, without charge or trial, under the occupying state of Israel’s administrative detention policy (Addameer, 2025).

The humanitarian crisis in Gaza is worsening, where food, medical supplies, and building materials remain severely restricted. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has reported that at least 60% of Gaza’s population faces severe malnutrition due to the deliberate obstruction of aid (OCHA, 2025). Thousands of bodies remain under the rubble as families struggle to find their missing family members, hospitals exceed capacity, and infectious diseases are spreading in overcrowded shelters. The occupation’s strategy of systematic deprivation, coupled with infrastructural devastation, exacerbates starvation, illness, and displacement (The Palestine Chronicle, 2025).

Furthermore, past ceasefire violations highlight the occupation state’s documented pattern of using temporary pauses to regroup militarily while retaining increased control over Palestinian lives (UN, 2025). Palestinian factions have expressed cautious optimism regarding diplomatic discussions on a long-term true peace framework, which includes lifting the blockade, rebuilding Gaza, and holding the occupying power accountable for its war crimes (Middle East Eye, 2025). However, skepticism prevails given the occupying state of Israel’s consistent breaches of previous agreements. Reports indicate that Israeli forces continue provocations in northern Gaza, raising concerns that the ceasefire will be weaponized to justify future escalations under different pretexts (FDD, 2024).

Beyond physical destruction, the war has obliterated Gaza’s cultural, educational, and health institutions, depriving a generation of Palestinian children of their right to education. Many schools have been converted into emergency shelters, leaving uncertainty about when learning can resume. The psychological toll on children, who have grown up amidst continuous bombardment, remains a critical yet under addressed issue (OHCHR, 2024).

Escalation in the West Bank: Systematic Repression and Human Rights Violations

Following the ceasefire, Israeli occupation forces have intensified military incursions into the West Bank, particularly in Jenin. A recent large-scale invasion of the Jenin refugee camp resulted in the martyrdom of 10 Palestinians and left dozens wounded. Drones, armored vehicles, and heavy artillery were deployed, causing extensive destruction. Reports from the Palestinian Red Crescent indicate that medical teams were deliberately prevented from reaching the injured, further exacerbating the crisis (Wafa, 2025). Night raids, arbitrary detentions, and mass arrests have escalated, disproportionately targeting activists, journalists, and community leaders documenting Israeli violations.

The Israeli occupation state has also imposed stricter movement restrictions across the West Bank, closing over 25 checkpoints in addition to the existing 198, effectively separating Palestinian communities. In major cities such as Nablus and Hebron, Palestinians face prolonged detentions and humiliating searches, including strip searches of women and children. Many Palestinians are denied passage entirely, further entrenching the occupation’s policy of collective punishment (The Palestine Chronicle, 2025). This siege-like reality has severe economic consequences, preventing workers from reaching their jobs and increasing financial precarity. Additionally, Israel continues withholding Palestinian tax revenues—Al-Maqassà—, a tactic aimed at crippling the Palestinian economy (Al Jazeera, 2025).

In tandem with state repression, Israeli settler violence has intensified under military protection. Armed settler groups have launched coordinated attacks on Palestinian villages, torching homes, destroying olive groves, and assaulting civilians. These attacks occur with complete impunity, exposing the Israeli government’s encouragement of settler violence (Wafa, 2025). Reports of Palestinian children being attacked on their way to school highlight the escalation of settler brutality, further reinforcing the occupation.



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The Trump Administration’s Role in Perpetuating Injustice

The return of the Trump administration has reinforced U.S. complicity in Israeli violations of international law. Within his first week in office, Trump reaffirmed unconditional support for Israeli policies, emboldening further aggression in the West Bank (USIP, 2025). His previous administration dismantled diplomatic norms by relocating the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, recognizing illegal Israeli settlements, and endorsing policies that have denied Palestinians their rights. Therefore implying the likelihood of U.S. opposition to any investigations into Israeli war crimes, meaning that Palestinians will continue facing injustices without recourse (FDD, 2025). Notably, the Biden administration did not reverse these policies but rather sustained the precedents set by Trump’s first term, maintaining unwavering U.S. support for Israeli actions until the most recent U.S. administration.

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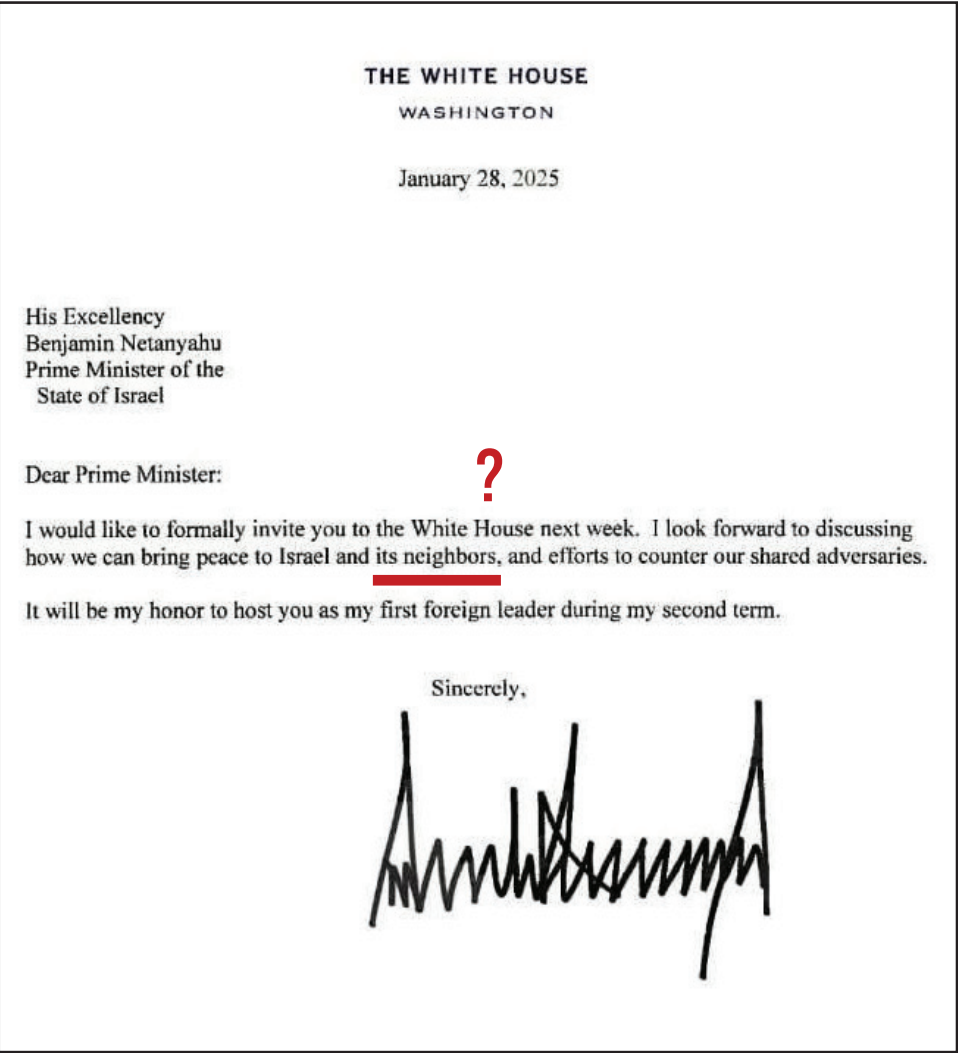
The arrest warrant issued by the ICC for Netanyahu and Smotrich has sparked significant international legal and political discourse. According to the ICC, the charges against Israeli leaders stem from war crimes and crimes against humanity related to actions in Palestine, which violate international law (ICC, 2025). The warrant challenges Israel’s impunity and highlights the role of international justice in addressing long-standing grievances of Palestinians. However, Trump’s administration’s policies could provide the Israeli occupying state with diplomatic immunity, complicating accountability mechanisms.

Moreover, the proposal to forcibly displace Palestinians from Gaza into neighbouring Arab countries has met with staunch resistance from several key regional powers. Egypt’s Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty underscored the unified Arab stance against the displacement plan, advocating for the reconstruction of Gaza without uprooting its Palestinian population (Reuters, 2025).

Jordan's King Abdullah II also expressed strong opposition, directly warning Trump about the destabilising effects such a plan would have on the region (Financial Times, 2025). Saudi Arabia, while maintaining a cautious stance, reiterated that it would only normalise ties with the occupation state following the establishment of a Palestinian state, firmly rejecting any plan that compromises Palestinian self-determination (Washington Institute, 2025). In contrast, the UAE has not yet taken a firm stance, reflecting a more measured or neutral position that contrasts with the vocal opposition of other Arab nations. This variation in response indicates the complex and differing diplomatic manoeuvres within the region regarding the U.S. initiative.



Netanyahu gifts Trump golden pager in nod to Lebanon explosions Israel Government Press Office



Donald J. Trump invited the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as his first foreign leader to visit the US during his second term of office.



Broader Implications for the Region

The ongoing escalation in the West Bank and the ceasefire’s uncertain future have far-reaching implications for Arab states, particularly those that have normalised relations with the occupying state of Israel, such as the UAE, Bahrain, and Morocco. While these states have cultivated close economic and security ties with the Israeli occupying state, the growing public discontent within their countries over Israeli policies may compel them to reassess their diplomatic positions. The shift in public sentiment could become a powerful catalyst for change, challenging the legitimacy of their relationships with the occupation state (Arab News, 2025).

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Perhaps the most significant consequence of the continued Israeli aggression has been the strengthening of Palestinian unity. Although political divisions persist within Palestinian leadership, there is a marked surge in public demand for a cohesive political agenda against the occupation. The resistance movements in Gaza and the West Bank, characterised by a growing sense of solidarity and shared purpose, underscore the urgent need for coordinated political and military leadership. This unity could become a critical force in resisting the occupation and asserting Palestinian rights on the international stage (Arab News, 2025).

Conclusion

The ceasefire in Gaza presents more uncertainties than resolutions. While it has momentarily halted mass slaughter, it has not ended the occupation’s policies of systemic oppression. With heightened aggression in the West Bank and ongoing humanitarian devastation in Gaza, this ceasefire appears to be yet another recalibration of Israeli military strategy rather than a step toward genuine peace.

The international community must recognize that there can be no peace without justice. Lifting the blockade, ending Israeli impunity, and upholding Palestinian self-determination are essential prerequisites for a just resolution. The question remains: Is this ceasefire the beginning of de-escalation, or merely a prelude to further conflict? The answer lies in scrutinizing historical patterns, geopolitical alliances, and the entrenched realities of occupation.



A Newspaper published an article about plans to evacuate Gaza residents 55 years ago.



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