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Ceasefire in Gaza: The struggle against Genocide and Occupation isn't over

- 6.1. “This is a day of happiness, and sadness, a shock and joy, but certainly it is a day we all must cry and cry long because of what we all lost. We did not lose friends, relatives, and homes only, we lost our city, Israel sent us back in history because of its brutal war” (*reaction of a displaced Gazan mother to news of a potential ceasefire, one of more than 1.9 million Palestinian men, women and children displaced since 7 October, 2023*).
- 6.2. These words provide an insight into the spectrum of emotions gripping the residents of the ravaged Gaza Strip after the news of a ceasefire broke on 15 January. Widely shared videos of jubilant celebrations drove home the sense of relief at the prospect of reprieve from the 15-month genocidal nightmare. A potent display of defiance, they show the determination of Palestinian people to remain on their land in the face of such unimaginable horrors. It also speaks to their broader and unbreakable desire to refuse to abandon their national identity and aspirations that the Zionist project and its imperialist backers have historically sought to destroy, to win their freedom from occupation and apartheid, and for millions of Palestinian refugees to be given the right to return to their historic homeland after 77 years of exile.
- 6.3. The possibility of receiving aid, medical attention and reuniting with relatives is an enormous source of hope. After 15 months of unimaginably horrific bombardment carried out by the Israeli State, Gaza's population may be afforded a temporary reprieve from the constant fear of death and destruction, and space to mourn. For many, even the opportunity to properly bury the perished is a small but important solace. But with this comes reflection on the sheer scale of the devastation, loss and trauma that will forever change the lives of those who survive the Israeli state's murderous campaign.

Fragile and Tenuous Deal

- 6.4. Yet, casting a shadow over the cautious optimism is the intensification of the genocide that has killed more than 150 people since the ceasefire's announcement, and the knowledge that hundreds more Palestinians will likely be murdered before the agreement becomes effective on 19 January.
- 6.5. The parameters of the accepted deal, brokered by Qatar, Egypt and the US, were already laid out by the outgoing Biden administration in May 2024. While the latter claimed that Hamas blocked its implementation, allowing the slaughter to drag on for a further eight months, this week, in a case of saying the “quiet part loud”, Israeli Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir revealed that it was his party and in turn, the

Israeli Government, that prevented a ceasefire from coming into place. This is yet another example of how Biden and his criminal gang have continuously provided cover for the Israeli regime in the context of this genocide.

- 6.6. The deal will, in theory, be implemented over three phases. In the first 42 days of the ceasefire, 33 hostages will be released in exchange for 737 Palestinian prisoners ; it also stipulates the daily entry of 600 trucks of humanitarian aid and a partial withdrawal from the populated areas of the Strip —although Israeli forces would maintain a so-called ‘buffer zone’ inside Gaza which would take about 60 square kilometers out of the enclave. This could amount to a de facto annexation of Palestinian land, further shrinking the space available for Gaza’s population while allowing Israeli forces to maintain military control deep inside the Strip.
- 6.7. On the seventh day of this first phase, Palestinians displaced in southern Gaza would allegedly be allowed to return to the north and by the 16th day, negotiations regarding the second phase of the deal are supposed to begin, pertaining to the exchange of the remaining hostages and of further batches of Palestinian prisoners, a “lasting halt” to the fighting, and a supposed total withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Strip.
- 6.8. A halt to the bombing of Gaza, the release of abductees on both sides and a scale-up of humanitarian assistance into the Strip will undoubtedly be welcomed by millions; but skepticism about the deal’s implementation and outcomes is more than warranted, and any illusions in the ‘sincerity’ of the bloodthirsty Israeli regime and its accomplices must be cast aside. True to its nature, the risk of the regime exploiting the initial phase of the deal to extract what it can, only to derail the remainder when it no longer serves its interests, is high.

Trump’s Foreign Policy

- 6.9. Despite attempts to claim credit for the ceasefire, Biden will not shed his rightful title of ‘genocide Joe.’ His unconditional support for U.S. imperialism’s most vital ally in the Middle East has been repeatedly tested by mass opposition in the US and internationally, yet each time he has run roughshod over it. This likely cost the Democrats the presidential election; a [recent survey](#) of 19 million people who voted for Biden in 2020, but did not do so in 2024, identified the ongoing onslaught in Gaza as the top reason for not doing so (above both the economy and immigration).
- 6.10. But aside from periodic and mealy-mouthed condemnations of Israeli atrocities, claims to “tirelessly” be working for a ceasefire, and frayed relations with Netanyahu, this never translated into real pressure through, for example, the halting of financial and military aid. Biden’s support for Israel remained ironclad. That Trump so easily strong-armed Netanyahu is a massive blow to the prestige of the Democrats, consolidating their image as a party of war and imperialism. The Biden administration did not ‘fail’ to achieve a ceasefire earlier, nor did it work “tirelessly” to achieve one; it deliberately chose not to leverage its influence, instead actively

enabling Netanyahu's genocidal cabinet to prolong the slaughter for months on end by generously supplying the means to carry it out. The Biden administration also vetoed UN Security Council resolutions calling for a ceasefire in Gaza on four separate occasions.

- 6.11. Trump is taking credit for an "EPIC deal" as he posted on his Truth Social account. Even one Biden official acknowledged that the president-elect's Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff played "a very important role" in the negotiations. This no doubt came as a surprise to Netanyahu who had hoped for a Trump victory. Surely, the same man who moved the US embassy to Jerusalem, torpedoed the Iran nuclear deal, ordered the assassination of Qassem Soleimani, recognised the occupied Golan Heights as "part of Israel" and stacked his incoming cabinet with extreme pro-Israeli figures (Mike Huckabee, nominee for US ambassador to Israel, for example, is a strong supporter of "Greater Israel" and denies the existence of Palestinians "there is really no such thing as a Palestinian") would prove a more reliable friend of Israel?
- 6.12. Of course, Trump's urgency to secure a ceasefire is not rooted in altruistic motives. A number of factors are at play. Cynically posing as an anti-war candidate in the presidential race, he tapped into an inchoate anger against US 'forever wars', promising to put "America first" instead of wasting billions abroad. The lack of a real left alternative even saw him harness the discontent of some Muslim and Arab Americans who ditched the war-mongering Democrats for their enabling of the genocide. Making good on an election promise even before being sworn in will therefore be a significant boost for the president-elect.
- 6.13. True, Biden was a more standard representative of the unshakeable alliance between US imperialism and Zionism. Trump may be transactional and less ideologically constrained, but his record shows he's no friend of the Palestinians or working classes and poor of the Middle East (or in the US).
- 6.14. His supposed 'isolationism' in no way means a less aggressive US imperialism. Recent remarks on Panama and Greenland show the opposite is true, paving the way for a more unstable and dangerous world. Likewise, in the Middle East he will embark on a more aggressive course against Iran. Part of this strategy will mean isolating the Islamic Republic from the oil-rich Gulf states, who in 2023 agreed to restore diplomatic relations with Iran – a political rapprochement sponsored by China that challenged US influence in the region. No doubt, Trump — who oversaw the 'Abraham Accords' to normalize relations between Arab and Gulf rulers and the Israeli occupying regime, partly to solidify an alliance against Iran — can see that the longer the genocide in Gaza goes on, the more likely the normalization framework will burst open, potentially pushing the Gulf states closer to US' imperialist rivals, China and Russia.

Pressure from below grinds gears of genocide machine

- 6.15. Whereas in the first Trump presidency the craven Gulf state regimes ditched the demand for a Palestinian state in Israeli normalisation agreements, the fury of revulsion that has spread amongst the Arab masses makes the same position politically impossible. In Morocco, the resistance against the normalization agreement has also grown markedly, including among the Amazighs. This is a new political reality that Trump 2.0 has to grapple with in order to get Israel-Saudi normalisation over the line and an important backdrop to the ceasefire. As 39-year-old Saudi ruler Mohammed bin Salman explained to Blinken:
- 6.16. “Seventy percent of my population is younger than me. For most of them, they never really knew much about the Palestinian issue. And so they’re being introduced to it for the time through this conflict. It’s a huge problem. Do I care personally about the Palestinian issue? I don’t, but my people do, so I need to make sure this is meaningful.”
- 6.17. These comments highlight the indelible imprint that the Gaza genocide has left in the consciousness of workers, youth and the oppressed masses, not just in the Middle East and North Africa, but across the globe. The ongoing international Gaza solidarity movement has drawn hundreds of millions into the streets against occupation and imperialism, exposing the complicity of the Western ruling classes in the genocide and the role of Arab capitalist regimes in maintaining the subjugation of the Palestinians. While a superficial analysis might see the deal as a product of mere geopolitical machinations, the ceasefire would be unimaginable without the pressure from a militant movement from below and seismic shifts in mass consciousness.

Netanyahu and political crisis within the Green Line

- 6.18. Yet the question remains as to why Netanyahu accepted the deal this time round, given his previous intransigence. A significant factor in the continuation of the genocide was to save his own political skin in the face of a deep political crisis within the Green Line. Prior to October 7th a historic mass movement against the far-right government’s reactionary judicial reform shook Israeli society to its foundations.
- 6.19. But the Hamas attacks granted ‘Bibi’ a lifeline as he leaned into and fanned the unprecedented wave of Zionist reaction that gripped the vast majority of the Israeli Jewish population. While we should be under no illusions that recent protests against the “war” and for the release of the hostages represent a clear opposition to occupation and Palestinian oppression they nevertheless exacerbate built-in contradictions of Israeli capitalism. According to the [December 2024 Israeli Voice Index](#), a majority of Israelis (57.5%) now support a comprehensive deal involving the release of all the hostages in exchange for an end to the “war”. That’s not to mention the small but growing layer of young people that have come out forthright against the genocide, with some refusing to serve in the Israeli army.
- 6.20. As a result of this crisis, cracks have emerged within the military establishment. This is also connected to the situation with the Gaza Strip itself where, despite

Hamas being significantly weakened after 15 months of relentless Israeli assaults, it has not been defeated let alone destroyed, and the Israeli occupying forces are not having it their way. Retired Israeli brigadier general, Amie Avivi, told the Wall Street Journal that “we are in a situation where the pace at which Hamas is rebuilding itself is higher than the pace that [the Israeli army] is eradicating them.”

- 6.21. The fact that the first phase of the ceasefire deal includes provisions for displaced Palestinians to return to the northern part of Gaza is also significant. If only on paper at this stage, it represents a departure from the so-called “Generals’ Plan”, aimed at the effective ethnic cleansing of Northern Gaza. This speaks for the Palestinians’ enduring refusal, even in the midst of abominable destruction and loss of lives, to surrender their claim to their homeland.
- 6.22. Indeed the acceptance of the deal is an expression of the relative impasse of the strategic aims, none of which have been achieved, that Netanyahu’s regime has been trying to enforce through inflicting genocide on the Palestinian people. His efforts to portray the expected release of the hostages as a direct product of the barbaric campaign of death and destruction his government has unleashed over the past 15 months cynically turn the reality on its head. Biden himself is on record admitting that a deal akin to the current one was on the table since May, laying bare the monstrous futility of the immense suffering inflicted.
- 6.23. While the regime has pursued a murderous rampage across the region – in Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and Iran – in a desperate bid to delay the inevitable, the unequal “war” has hit a deadlock.
- 6.24. Nevertheless the far-right politicians and their reactionary social base will not take this lying down. Protests erupted on Wednesday and Thursday against the ceasefire. Young Orthodox men chanted “Conquest, expulsion, settlement.” Divisions in the government delayed the vote in the Knesset from Thursday morning to Friday night, as key far right figures offered ultimatums to Netanyahu. Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich of the Religious Zionism party said he would offer conditional support to the first phase of the deal on the condition that the “war to eliminate Hamas” would resume immediately after. National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir argued that the deal represents a “complete victory for Hamas” and that if approved, his ‘Jewish Power’ party would leave the coalition.
- 6.25. However, in order to appease them, Netanyahu told his ministers that Israel had received “definitive guarantees” from both Biden and Trump that “if the negotiations on phase two of the deal fail, and Hamas does not accept our security demands, we will resume intensive fighting with the backing of the United States.” While Netanyahu managed to navigate these internal pressures for now —as the deal is now ratified and Ben Gvir said he would not bring down the government over it—, these manoeuvres underline the Israeli regime’s readiness to torpedo the deal at its own convenience.

6.26. They show that this ceasefire is not a pathway to lasting peace and relief but a precarious, tactical pause rooted in a broader strategy of continual aggression. An intensification of the Israeli State's violence and settlement expansion policies in the Occupied West Bank, including possible attempts to annex it in part or fully, will also likely be on the cards, as part of the 'sweeteners' given by Netanyahu to the far-right within his coalition in an attempt to keep them on board. Those factions have long been campaigning for Israel to impose "sovereignty" over "Judea and Samaria" and, banking on support from Trump as president, have vowed to make 2025 the year to make it happen.

Continue to Build the Movement against Genocide, Capitalism and Imperialism

6.27. The above reveals the fragile and tenuous nature of the ceasefire. Ongoing massacres in Gaza, continuing deadly raids in the Occupied West Bank and the Israeli regime's murky record on "honouring" ceasefires — including most recently in Lebanon, where the Israeli regime has violated repeatedly the ceasefire agreement concluded in November last year, notably by launching near-daily airstrikes since the deal took effect — should serve as a bitter warning to the international Gaza solidarity movement to not demobilise but redouble our efforts in deepening and extending the struggle in our communities, workplaces and universities. This should involve organising protests, boycotts, occupations and strikes that target all companies and institutions that have been complicit in this genocide and the occupation of Palestine.

6.28. Demands could, and should, include a complete and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli troops from the entire Gaza Strip as well as from Lebanon, Syria, the Occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, free and unrestricted access across Gaza for its people, the release of "all for all" (including the over 12,000 Palestinians arrested in the Occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem since October 2023), an end to the blockade of Gaza and an immediate opening of all border crossings, and a reversal of the Israeli ban on the UNRWA.

6.29. The UN estimates that it would take 350 years to rebuild Gaza to the desperately impoverished state in which it was prior to 7 October 2023 (if it remains the 'open air prison' it was long rendered by the Israeli blockade). This alone shows the need to make the struggle for liberation, justice and peace one also for the socialist transformation of the region and the world. An appropriate start for rebuilding would be to fight for the profits of the arms industry that is dripping with Palestinian blood, from Israel to the EU and the US, to be diverted to Gaza.

6.30. In a poll late last year, 96 percent of children in Gaza expressed that they expected to be killed at any time, and 49 percent said they wished for death. Beyond restoring infrastructure and all physical sources of life — that have been systematically destroyed by the Israeli military — from drinking water, electricity and sanitation to agriculture, healthcare, education etc, "reconstruction" would be incomplete

without recognising the extreme levels of trauma, bound to haunt many generations, and healing them – which is only possible on the basis of a bringing the decades of violent oppression to a permanent end.

- 6.31. It is high time that international media makes up for its complicity in minimising and justifying the genocide – leaving Gazan journalists and ordinary people, even children, to give first-person accounts of the mass murder, maiming, torture and starvation – by going in to bear witness. These corporate media have however shown they cannot be trusted and the ceasefire should be used to organise mass based investigations, democratically controlled by Gaza's residents, to make clear the full extent of the atrocities and their impact.
- 6.32. The need to hold accountable all those responsible for the crimes inflicted on the Palestinians during the genocide will also certainly become an important pillar of the solidarity movement in the period ahead. While such accountability is essential, it must go beyond the exposure and punishment of individuals; it is about deepening the struggle towards the dismantling of the entire machinery of oppression that has sustained the ongoing subjugation of the Palestinian masses.
- 6.33. Indeed the Gaza genocide is but the latest and most violent stage in the decades long oppression of the Palestinians carried out by the Zionist Project and the State that it spawned in 1948. Far from an aberration, it is the logical continuation of a brutal history of dispossession, ethnic cleansing and vicious dehumanisation — created and maintained by Western imperialist powers.
- 6.34. It is now correctly and abundantly clear to the Palestinian people themselves and for many of the millions who have stood in solidarity with them that their freedom will never be achieved as long as not only Netanyahu's war cabinet, but the Israeli State itself, remains in existence. It must be overthrown and smashed. But this question cannot be left there. This state is part and parcel of the system of imperialism and capitalism that has created a prisonhouse of violence, exploitation and oppression for the peoples of the Middle East, North Africa and beyond. The Gaza genocide has posed the urgent necessity for its overthrow, a task for which the working class — both in the region and in the imperialist countries whose governments have enabled these 15 months of horror— has a critical role to play.
- 6.35. The deep-seated sentiment of solidarity with the Palestinian people across the region, demonstrated once again by the eruptions of celebrations in Jordan, Morocco, Syria and beyond upon hearing of the ceasefire on Wednesday, must also be harnessed into a broader, revolutionary struggle to overthrow all the autocratic and corrupt regimes that have long turned a blind eye to the Israeli state aggression or exploited it to their own ends (including the Palestinian Authority, which has once again with its bloody repression in Jenin shown its character of middle men and prison wardens for the occupation)
- 6.36. Their rule must be replaced by revolutionary governments of the working class and poor in the Middle East and North Africa that seize the wealth and resources

from the super-rich elites, big business and multinationals who hoard and abuse it. These resources could notably be used to rebuild Gaza, restore its infrastructure and provide for the basic needs of its people. A democratic socialist transformation of this region would mean the creation of a society with justice and equality for all and oppression, exploitation and poverty for none. It would afford both Palestinians and Israeli Jews the right to national self-determination, allow Palestinians the right of return to their historic homeland and for both peoples to live in peace and security.

6.37. This is a prize worth fighting and struggling for—the last 15 months have proven the hellscape that will be created if the existing order remains in place.