

Ceasefire in Israel

May 21, 2021

After more than 11 days of fighting, a ceasefire, agreed to by both sides, seems to be holding.

Here are the main updates for today:

Ceasefire

- A ceasefire came into effect at 2:00am Israel time early Friday morning (7:00pm Thursday night ET) following more than 11 days of intense fighting between Israel and Hamas and other terror groups in Gaza.
- Around 11:00pm Israel time, the Prime Minister's Office announced that the security cabinet had unanimously agreed to a "mutual and unconditional cessation of hostilities." Hamas also agreed to the ceasefire terms.
- Egypt brokered the agreement, with considerable help from the United States government, including President Biden's personal involvement.
- Hamas claims that the agreement includes guarantees by Israel that it will not evict the Arab tenants in the Shiekh Jarrah property dispute, and that it will remove police from the Temple Mount. Israel strongly denied that this is part of the agreement.
- Hamas continued to fire rockets into Israel after the ceasefire was announced, but since 2:00am, when the ceasefire formally came into effect, there have been no violations of the agreement.
- Israel has said it is ready to retaliate significantly if Hamas breaks the truce; and IDF troops remain in position along the border.
- Defense Minister Benny Gantz said that "the reality on the ground will determine the continuation of the campaign...quiet will be met by quiet...The defense establishment continues its readiness to protect Israeli citizens."
- Ayelet Kaufman, the sister of slain IDF soldier Hadar Goldin whose body is believed to be held by Hamas in Gaza, expressed the family's dismay that the ceasefire did not include the return of her brother's remains - and other captives. "We have been waiting seven years for a phone call that should have come at 2 a.m. They didn't talk to us, they didn't even say 'we tried,'"

Return to Normal?

- With no further rocket strikes, many restrictions on gatherings in Israel have been lifted and a number of inter-city roads that were closed have now been re-opened.

- Schools remain closed today in the Gaza area and central Israel but are likely to reopen on Sunday.
- Some Israeli opposition politicians have slammed the agreement, saying that the Netanyahu government achieved little in 11 days of fighting. Opposition Leader Yair Lapid said, “The military succeeded in the tasks it was given, the government failed.”
- Similarly, Netanyahu rival and New Hope leader Gidon Sa’ar said, the agreement was “embarrassing,” and that “with the best intelligence and air force in the world, all Netanyahu managed to get from Hamas was a ‘ceasefire with no conditions.’”

More than 11 days of fighting:

- Over the previous eleven and a half days of Hamas attacks:
 - More than 4,300 rockets were fired at Israel by Hamas and other terror groups.
 - Of these rockets:
 - 15% fell short of the border and landed in Gaza, often causing damage, injury and even death to Palestinians in the enclave.
 - 45% landed in “open space,” in Israel, causing only minor damage to roads or agricultural areas.
 - 37% were shot down by the Iron Dome.
 - 3% hit populated areas in Israel
 - Twelve people in Israel have died since the beginning of the fighting as a result of the rockets, and over 335 were injured. Another Israeli was killed during rioting inside Israel.
- In response to rockets from Gaza, the Israeli military struck the terror groups responsible, especially Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip:
 - The IDF carried out some 570 airstrikes targeting Hamas rockets and their launchers. Of these, 340 strikes targeted rocket launching infrastructure such as launch pits, 230 ground-to-ground rockets, and 70 multi-barrel rocket launchers. Another 35 strikes targeted mortars.
 - During the fighting, the military also assassinated 25 senior terror officials and some 200 other terrorists belonging to Hamas or Palestinian Islamic Jihad.
 - The IDF says that it also “severely damaged” Hamas’s ability to develop and produce weapons, destroying workshops and research centers, some of which were designed to upgrade their weaponry.
 - The IDF also destroyed over 100 km of Hamas’s tunnel network during multiple. See [here](#) for video of the Hamas “metro.”
 - In other operations, the IDF also struck several buildings that held “military assets of Hamas” including 10 government offices, 11 internal security targets and five banks that manage terror funds.
 - In addition, the IDF says that it struck tens of “terror command rooms.” See [here](#) for an article on the legal background of Israel’s strike against the building housing the AP and Al Jazeera media offices.

- According to Hamas, 232 people were killed in Gaza, (including more than 66 children), and more than 1,600 were injured in thousands of Israeli airstrikes.

Diplomacy

- Israel's Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi says he spoke to US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and thanked him for Washington's "uncompromising support" for Israel during the Gaza fighting. He also confirmed reports that Blinken intends to visit Israel soon.
- Israel's Ambassador to the UN Gilad Erdan walked out of the General Assembly yesterday saying that "shameful lies" about Israel were being presented. See video [here](#).

As always, Jewish Federations, through JFNA's Israel Office, is keeping a constant watch on developments in the region and is in close touch with authorities, and our partners on the ground.

For more information, please contact JFNA's [Dani Wassner](#), Director of Israeli Government Relations.

Sources: *Office of the Prime Minister, IDF Spokesperson, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Government Press Office, N12 Israel News, The Times of Israel, Galei Tzahal Radio, The Jerusalem Post, Ynet, i24 News, Alma.*