

Israel announces ceasefire as UN says 90,000 Palestinians displaced by bombardment

Kevin Reed
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The Israeli security cabinet voted unanimously late Thursday to a “mutual and unconditional” cessation of hostilities, according to a statement from the office of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

News reports said a ceasefire brokered by Egypt had been agreed to between Israel and the Palestinian groups, Hamas and Islamic Jihad, and was set to take effect at 2:00 a.m. on Friday (7:00 p.m. Eastern Time). A Hamas official also confirmed the agreement with the Reuters news agency, saying the ceasefire would be “mutual and simultaneous.”

It is unclear how long the ceasefire will last before Israel resumes its decadeslong violence against the Palestinians. However, as the smoke clears, the massive toll of the Israeli onslaught on Gaza has come into view.

The Gaza Health Ministry reported on Thursday afternoon that at least 232 people have been killed, including 65 children, and more than 1,900 have been wounded by the Zionist regime. As of Wednesday, the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said that the casualties in the West Bank stood at 25 deaths, including four children, and 6,309 wounded. Total casualties in Israel were reported at 12 dead and 796 injured on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the UN OCHA said on Thursday that more than 90,000 Palestinians have been displaced from their homes over the past 11 days by Israel’s assault on the Gaza Strip.

The OCHA report stated that hostilities resulted in additional displacements, bringing the cumulative number of “internally displaced persons (IDPs) to about 91,000, including 66,000 seeking protection in 58 UNRWA schools across Gaza and over 25,000 staying with host families.”

OCHA spokesman Jens Laerke also told the Turkish

Anadolu Agency, “Overall, the situation remains alarming. Hostilities between Israeli forces and armed groups in Gaza continued for the ninth day yesterday, but at a lesser intensity. On the other hand, clashes between Palestinians and Israeli forces across the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, intensified.”

In remarks at the White House after the announcement of the ceasefire, US President Biden fully backed Israel’s violent assault, declaring, “The United States fully supports Israel’s right to defend itself against indiscriminate rocket attacks by Hamas and other Gaza-based terrorist groups that have taken the lives of innocent civilians.”

Biden also said he “commended” the Israelis for bringing the immediate conflict to an end after 11 days and, during a call earlier in the day, the President “assured” Prime Minister Netanyahu of continued US military support.

Just one day before the ceasefire announcement, Biden was praising Netanyahu for making progress in “degrading the capabilities of Hamas and other terrorist elements.”

As reviewed yesterday on the *World Socialist Web Site*, responsibility for the murderous campaign by the Israeli Defense Forces on Gaza lies squarely with US imperialism. The bombardment of defenseless Palestinians is being carried out with weapons and funding provided by the US government and with the endorsement of both the Democrats and Republicans in Washington D.C.

Al Jazeera reported that Palestinians in Ramallah celebrated as the ceasefire took hold early Friday, according to correspondent Safwat al-Kahlout, who said the sounds of fireworks and gunshots into the air could be heard. “Thousands of people went into the street to celebrate,” al-Kahlout said as Palestinians

considered the ceasefire to be a victory.

An example of the violence directed against innocent civilians was an Israeli air raid on a Gaza family home, which killed a Palestinian man with disabilities, his pregnant wife and their three-year-old daughter, as reported by Al Jazeera on Thursday.

Relatives and authorities said that Eyad Salha and his wife, both age 33, were preparing to eat lunch on Wednesday, when “a missile tore through the seaside building’s facade and destroyed all three rooms in their Deir el-Balah flat, in the central Gaza Strip,” Al Jazeera reported.

Salha’s brother said the man had been unable to walk for 14 years and was not an armed fighter. “What did my brother do? He was just sitting in his wheelchair. What did his daughter ever do? What did his wife do?” he told the AFP news agency.



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