

One Year On: Assessing the Status of the Gaza Ceasefire

Larry Garber, Policy Fellow & Liam Hamama, Policy Assistant | October 9, 2026

Overview

The ceasefire that went into effect on October 10, 2025, and the accompanying 20-point peace plan brought a sense of relief for Palestinians and Israelis. The 20 living Israeli hostages returned within three days of the ceasefire, and eventually the bodies of 28 Israelis who died on October 7 or in captivity were repatriated. More than 1,950 Palestinian prisoners were released, and food deliveries in Gaza increased significantly, alleviating the severe shortages contributing to malnutrition and other medical problems. **And yet, by any objective metric, the implementation of Phase II of President Trump’s 20-point peace plan – in which reconstruction, Hamas disarmament, and IDF withdrawals were supposed to take place – has been an abject failure.**

Twelve months after the ceasefire was signed, Hamas has not disarmed and remains the de facto government in the part of Gaza where nearly all its residents now live. Rather than withdrawing from Gaza, the IDF has [expanded](#) its physical footprint within the Strip. The National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG), which is composed of Palestinian technocrats tasked with leading the reconstruction of Gaza, remains stuck in Cairo. The much-touted International Stabilization Force (ISF) has yet to mobilize and deploy. A newly constituted Palestinian police force for Gaza does not yet exist.

Nor has the violence directed at Palestinians in Gaza ceased; since the ceasefire went into effect, [more than 1,400 Palestinians](#) have been killed by the IDF, including [more than 300 children](#). And while the availability of food in Gaza has dramatically increased compared to a year ago, the humanitarian situation remains at crisis levels, as meaningful economic and social recovery has yet to begin. Particularly as winter approaches, the lack of adequate shelters for the vast majority of the population remains a preeminent problem.

Below, we track progress over the past 12 months with respect to each key pillar of the ceasefire.

Assessing the Status of the 20-Point Plan

The October 10, 2025, 20-point ceasefire plan envisioned two phases. In **Phase I**, the two sides agreed to stop fighting; Hamas also agreed to release the remaining living and deceased Israeli hostages, and Israel agreed to free nearly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners, allow a surge of humanitarian aid, and withdraw to a line granting it control of 54 percent of the Strip.

Phase II provisions include disarming Hamas, Israeli military withdrawals from Gaza, and the rebuilding of Gaza. Neither side made firm commitments related to Phase II. Instead, those were left to the Trump-controlled Board of Peace (BOP) to implement based on further negotiations with the relevant parties.

Phase I

I. Ending the Fighting and Releasing the Hostages:

What the Plan Says

“3. If both sides agree to this proposal, the war will immediately end. Israeli forces will withdraw to the agreed-upon line to prepare for a hostage release. During this time, all military operations, including aerial and artillery bombardment, will be suspended, and battle lines will remain frozen until conditions are met for the complete staged withdrawal.”

“4. Within 72 hours of Israel publicly accepting this agreement, all hostages, alive and deceased, will be returned.”

The only Phase I element that proceeded as intended was the hostage exchange. All 20 living Israeli hostages in Gaza were released within three days of the ceasefire. The last body of the 28 deceased Israeli hostages, Ran Gvili, was recovered by the IDF on January 26, 2026. Israel freed approximately 1,950 living Palestinian prisoners and the bodies of 360 during the initial days following the ceasefire.

Rather than ending, fighting has significantly decreased in intensity. During the early weeks of the agreement, Hamas fighters carried out repeated attacks on Israeli forces, including attacks that killed Israeli soldiers. In recent months, Israel has conducted near-daily assaults inside the Strip, while Hamas attacks have stopped. The [IDF military actions](#) are part of a dedicated campaign, known as NILI (an acronym for a biblical phrase which translates as "the Eternal One of Israel will not lie"), to identify and kill every Hamas fighter involved in the October 7 attack.

Israel has expanded its control from 54 to 70 percent of the Strip. While the IDF initially withdrew to what has become known as the Yellow Line, in May Prime Minister Netanyahu [ordered](#) Israel's military to expand its control from the agreed-upon 54 percent to 70 percent. Israel today controls between 65 percent and 70 percent of the Strip.

II. Unimpeded Surge of Humanitarian Aid

What the Plan Says

“7. Upon acceptance of this agreement, full aid will be immediately sent into the Gaza Strip. At a minimum, aid quantities will be consistent with what was included in the January 19, 2025, agreement regarding humanitarian aid, including rehabilitation of infrastructure (water, electricity, sewage), rehabilitation of hospitals and bakeries, and entry of necessary equipment to remove rubble and open roads.”

“8. Entry of distribution and aid in the Gaza Strip will proceed without interference from the two parties through the United Nations and its agencies, and the Red Crescent, in addition to other international institutions not associated in any manner with either party.”

The most significant improvements during the past year have been in food security and education. Famine conditions have ended, and [nearly 500,000 children](#) are now enrolled in learning spaces run by the UN and its partners. Yet even in these areas, the population’s needs remain immense. [Nearly 60 percent](#) of the population faced crisis-level food insecurity in the last six months, while [more than 200,000 children](#) remain out of school. Even for those who have returned to learning, education is taking place in temporary facilities rather than functioning schools, as many schools remain damaged or continue to shelter displaced families.

Every other aspect of the population’s humanitarian needs remains dire due to ongoing Israeli limits on imports of goods, restrictions on items classified as “dual use,” and funding shortages:

- **Approximately [65 percent](#) of households are living in tents or makeshift shelters – most of which are in poor condition.** As the winter season approaches, displacement sites hosting over 450,000 people have been identified as being at high risk of flooding. The United Nations assesses that thousands of high-performance tents equipped with strong tent poles and heating are needed to protect the civilian population from projected extreme winter cold.
- **The medical sector is dealing with life-threatening shortages** affecting the diagnosis and treatment of chronic conditions like cancer and diabetes. Shortages in generator engine oil and spare parts – also blocked due to their “dual-use” classification – are also disrupting medical services.
- **There has been little progress on the rehabilitation of water and sanitation infrastructure** because of limits on the entry of machinery and materials essential for reconstruction. Water production from Gaza’s desalination plants [remains low](#) due to a lack of spare parts and equipment. As a result, [74 percent](#) of the population still relies on trucked drinking water.
- **Water quality remains a severe concern.** More than [73 percent](#) of samples collected by the WHO failed to meet its safety standards, and 18 percent showed microbiological contamination.
- **Garbage and waste collection is similarly [limited](#).** Vehicles and machinery that were previously used for these purposes remain grounded, forcing services to rely on donkey carts and UN trucks.

Phase II

I. Disarming Hamas and Israeli Withdrawal

What the Plan Says

“13. Hamas and other factions agree to not have any role in the governance of Gaza, directly, indirectly, or in any form. All military, terror, and offensive infrastructure, including tunnels and weapon production facilities, will be destroyed and not rebuilt. There will be a process of demilitarization of Gaza under the supervision of independent monitors, which will include placing weapons permanently beyond use through an agreed process of decommissioning, and supported by an internationally funded buy back and reintegration program all verified by the independent monitors.”

16. As the ISF establishes control and stability, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) will withdraw based on standards, milestones, and timeframes linked to demilitarization... Practically, the IDF will progressively hand over the Gaza territory it occupies to the ISF according to an agreement they will make with the transitional authority until they are withdrawn completely from Gaza, save for a security perimeter presence that will remain until Gaza is properly secure.”

Perhaps the most significant development toward implementing Phase II came in July, when the BOP announced that Hamas had agreed to a roadmap under which it would disarm in phases, with each stage of decommissioning linked to a corresponding Israeli withdrawal. The [roadmap](#) explicitly states: “At the end of the process... only NCAG shall hold, store or control weapons in Gaza.”

Implementation of the roadmap, however, immediately stalled. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rejected the premise of a sequenced plan, insisting instead that Hamas must fully disarm before Israel undertakes any withdrawals. Unless Israel changes its position on sequencing, neither Hamas’s disarmament nor further Israeli withdrawals are likely to happen.

The three major outstanding questions are therefore: (1) Will Israel’s election produce a government willing to accept the Board of Peace’s phased approach to Hamas disarmament and Israeli withdrawal? (2) Can meaningful progress on the other elements of Phase II – including the deployment of the NCAG, Palestinian police and the ISF, as well as reconstruction – occur while disarmament and withdrawal remain stalled? And (3) will the Trump Administration demonstrate a willingness to pressure the Israeli government over implementation of the ceasefire after Israel’s election? Looming over these questions is the concern that a failure to proceed with Hamas disarmament may trigger a renewed Israeli offensive to eliminate Hamas’ military capabilities.

II. Establishing a Governance and Security Alternative to Hamas

What the Plan Says

“9. Gaza will be governed under the temporary transitional governance of a technocratic, apolitical Palestinian committee, responsible for delivering the day-to-day running of public services and municipalities for the people in Gaza. This committee will be made up of qualified Palestinians and international experts, with oversight and supervision by a new international transitional body, the ‘Board of Peace.’”

Hamas [expressed](#) a willingness to hand over administrative authority to NCAG back in January, but the committee is operating from Cairo and has yet to begin governing inside Gaza. In July, Hamas [agreed](#) to also hand over policing to the Committee as part of the Board of Peace disarmament roadmap. Yet Israel [continues](#) to prevent NCAG from deploying and exercising authority across Gaza, while plans to establish a new Palestinian police force have not materialized. Israel also continues to [block](#) 16,500 Gazans – vetted by Israeli security services to serve in NCAG’s new police force – from leaving the Strip to undergo training in Egypt.

International Stabilization Force (ISF)

“15. The United States will work with Arab and international partners to develop a temporary International Stabilization Force (ISF) to immediately deploy in Gaza. The ISF will train and provide support to vetted Palestinian police forces in Gaza. This force will be the long-term internal security solution. The ISF will work with Israel and Egypt to help secure border areas, along with newly trained Palestinian police forces.”

Several countries, including Morocco, Kazakhstan, Albania, Kosovo and Uganda, have [reportedly](#) agreed to commit personnel to the ISF, but the force has [not yet been assembled](#).

Given the difficulties in recruiting and training a robust force, the BOP now appears to envision a significantly more limited role for the ISF than originally laid out. The 15-point disarmament roadmap released in July 2026 [outlines](#) the ISF monitoring buffer zones between Israeli- and NCAG-controlled territory, and escorting humanitarian convoys. Despite the narrower mandate, even these functions will still require the recruitment and deployment of a significant international force and the inclusion of countries with more varied experience.

III. Reconstruction

What the Plan Says

“2. Gaza will be redeveloped for the benefit of the people of Gaza, who have suffered more than enough.”

“10. A Trump economic development plan to rebuild and energize Gaza will be created by convening a panel of experts who have helped birth some of the thriving modern miracle cities in the Middle East.”

While NCAG has made substantial progress developing plans to rebuild Gaza, there has been very little progress on the ground. In September, the Committee [unveiled](#) a six-month, \$2.45 billion recovery program comprising 66 programs covering infrastructure, public services and economic recovery. About half of the proposed spending is devoted to infrastructure, including insulated temporary shelters, debris and unexploded-ordnance removal, and the rehabilitation of hospitals, schools, roads, water, and electricity networks. Most of the remaining funding is devoted to security-related programs, including the deployment of the ISF and the new Palestinian police force. **The projects are designed to begin once NCAG can enter and operate in Gaza, funding is secured, and the necessary materials and equipment can enter the Strip** – all substantial challenges that are unlikely to be resolved without progress on Hamas’s disarmament and further Israeli withdrawal.

The Strip therefore remains frozen in a state of disaster rather than recovery. Some early-recovery projects are underway, but they barely scratch the surface of what is needed. Since the ceasefire began, the UN has [cleared](#) 630,000 tonnes of debris – just over one percent of the 60 million tonnes accumulated in Gaza since October 2023. Large-scale recovery remains constrained by funding shortages, donor concerns that renewed fighting could destroy new investments, and Israeli restrictions on heavy machinery, spare parts, fuel, and construction materials classified as “dual-use.”

More limited efforts to break the deadlock in Gaza have stalled too. In August, Israel [approved](#) in principle a BOP pilot project in the Israeli-controlled city of Rafah that would house tens of thousands of Palestinians in mobile homes. A vetted Palestinian police force and the ISF would provide internal security, while the IDF would secure the border. Yet even this limited project has yet to be implemented, with Israel [reportedly](#) blocking the mobile homes intended for the site from entering Gaza.

Early-recovery efforts are indeed the immediate priority, but **the challenge of rebuilding Gaza beyond immediate recovery programs is vastly greater.** The World Bank, European Union, and UN assess that reconstruction will cost \$71.4 billion over the next decade. As the BOP [stated](#) in May and has regularly repeated: “Reconstruction cannot commence where weapons

have not been laid down.” **Until there is an agreement to fundamentally alter the security reality in Gaza, the BOP is likely to continue struggling to mobilize anything close to the financing needed to rebuild Gaza.**