

New Gaza Ceasefire Roadmap Hanging in the Balance

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Overview

The Board of Peace's (BoP) announcement last Friday (7/31) of a new roadmap to full implementation of the October 2025 Gaza Ceasefire Agreement had the potential to be a significant step forward. Most importantly, Hamas agreed to a phased disarmament plan, which had been the main impediment to progress for the past 10 months. This could create a pathway to a sustainable resolution of the Gaza conflict, which in many ways has never fully ended, while unlocking progress on addressing the dire conditions in Gaza and Israel's security concerns.

However, it now appears that Israel has effectively rejected the core of the BoP plan. The original BoP roadmap envisioned a phased, reciprocal and sequential approach to Hamas' disarmament, linking the handover of heavy weapons that could directly threaten Israel to the IDF's gradual withdrawal. Prime Minister Netanyahu [insisted](#) instead that Hamas hand over all its heavy and light arms upfront, before any IDF withdrawals take place. And the Board of Peace released a [statement](#) on Monday redefining the terms of the withdrawal plan in alignment with Israel's demand – a significant departure from the terms that had delivered Hamas' agreement. This threatens to undermine the entire process before it even begins.

Beyond disagreements over sequencing, arms and withdrawals, there also remain major logistical issues, including the deployment of the International Stabilization Force (ISF) and training and vetting thousands of Palestinian police officers, that will require close attention to resolve. Progress on the plan will therefore require sustained pressure and continued diplomatic engagement from the United States, Qatar, Egypt, and Turkey.

The Details of the BoP Plan

The new BoP roadmap establishes a sequential process, to be overseen by a newly created International Verification Committee, linking the phased decommissioning of Hamas' weapons to corresponding Israeli withdrawals. The details and sequencing of the phased decommissioning and withdrawals are left to the parties to negotiate in a 14-day period that begins once both parties approve the plan. In this first stage, Hamas and Israel must also comply fully with their commitments in the October 2025 ceasefire. This requires that Israel cease its strikes in Gaza, return to the original Yellow Line that it has encroached well beyond, and allow full aid to enter the Strip.

Once both parties comply with the October 2025 ceasefire commitments, the BoP plan calls for Hamas and Israel to allow the Palestinian technocratic committee (NCAG) to enter Gaza, and for Hamas to transfer responsibility for internal security, civilian governance, and public services to it. Existing Hamas-run police structures would be placed under NCAG's authority, their weapons

transferred to its control, and their personnel subjected to comprehensive vetting. Newly trained police officers would be incorporated into this police force too.

After NCAG is deployed, the process of decommissioning and storing Hamas' heavy weapons, military production sites, weapons depots, and tunnels is supposed to begin – in a phased process directly linked to Israeli withdrawals from areas under its control in Gaza.

Notably, whereas the BoP plan envisions the phased decommissioning of Hamas' *heavy* weapons and military infrastructure, it includes no requirement that Hamas fighters give up their *light* arms. Instead, it says NCAG will hold exclusive authority to register personal weapons and issue or revoke licenses. This would have left the precise treatment of Hamas' firearms for the technocratic committee to determine in the future.

Israeli Opposition

The initial BoP plan appeared to force Netanyahu into a political bind. Accepting it risked provoking the Israeli right; rejecting it risked alienating President Trump, whose support he needs ahead of Israel's elections. Netanyahu has instead exploited the roadmap's ambiguities to redefine its terms.

The original plan envisioned a reciprocal, sequential implementation of decommissioning in exchange for Israeli withdrawals. [Clause 8](#) of the agreement explicitly states that “[The decommissioning] process shall be linked to an Israeli withdrawal, in phases, from the areas under its control in Gaza,” and President Trump's [Truth Social post](#) announcing the plan stated, “The agreement will be carried out in carefully structured phases. As disarmament is completed, Israeli forces will withdraw.”

Israeli officials immediately rejected any phased process, demanding instead that Hamas' complete disarmament take place ahead of any Israeli withdrawal. As Netanyahu [said](#), “We're not withdrawing from our current lines until Hamas is totally disarmed.” Following a meeting between BoP Director General Nickolay Mladenov and Netanyahu, the Board of Peace [stated](#) on Monday that “the withdrawal of the IDF beyond the Yellow Line will take place only once decommissioning is complete. This applies to light weapons, heavy weapons, and the tunnels alike.” Replacing phased, reciprocal implementation with complete disarmament upfront – and expanding Hamas' obligations to include light arms – already demonstrates that Israel can reshape the agreement's terms far beyond anything Hamas might plausibly agree to.

The Israeli government's apparent desire to obstruct an agreement that would remove Hamas from power and see its heavy weapons and tunnels decommissioned raises a broader question regarding Israel's intentions in Gaza. Israeli [National Security Minister](#) Itamar Ben-Gvir publicly opposed the BoP plan, calling on Israel to “encourage emigration” of Gaza's population instead – a euphemism for forced displacement. Statements by Israel's [prime minister](#), [defense minister](#), and [finance minister](#) in recent months echo the same goal of forced displacement, and a march attended by [almost half](#) the Israeli government last month called for the construction of Israeli settlements in the Strip. If the forced displacement of Gaza's population and the construction of

settlements are indeed the Israeli government's goals in Gaza, then absent significant pressure from the Trump administration it is unlikely that Israel will agree to any withdrawals.

Implementation Logistics Pose Further Obstacles

Beyond negotiations on the sequencing of disarmament and withdrawals, working out the mechanics of implementation alone could take months, if not longer. Unlike the original internal security role envisioned in the 20-point plan, under the new BoP plan the International Stabilization Force (ISF)'s role is limited to monitoring the buffer zones between Israel-controlled territories and NCAG-controlled territories and escorting humanitarian aid convoys. Yet even for this more limited role, the [only 200 ISF peacekeepers](#) available for deployment today are well short of the number needed for successful deployment. Because the roadmap makes the ISF's deployment a prerequisite for decommissioning and Israeli withdrawals, delays in recruiting, training, and deploying the force could stall the entire process.

Building out NCAG's internal security capacity poses a further challenge. The plan currently envisions Gaza's [10,000-person](#) Hamas-run police force undergoing vetting and then joining forces with newly trained officers to form NCAG's internal security force. Yet reporting suggests neither the vetting process nor the training of recruits has begun. Implementing a vetting process that is acceptable to all parties and training a new set of officers will likely take many months.

The Way Forward

Resolving the disagreement over sequencing and the treatment of Hamas' arms is critical to allowing the BoP plan to move ahead, so the mediators should continue to press both sides to find a reasonable compromise. But even if negotiations over those issues stall, the United States and regional mediators should press both parties to comply with their outstanding obligations under the October 2025 ceasefire and advance those elements of the roadmap that do not depend on a final disarmament agreement.

Hamas should transfer responsibility for civilian governance, public services, and internal security to NCAG and facilitate its entry into Gaza. Israel, too, should allow NCAG to enter the Strip. It should also cease its bombing of Gaza, return to the original Yellow Line, and allow the full flow of humanitarian assistance. Implementing these steps would provide immediate relief to Gaza's population, begin the transition away from Hamas rule, and preserve a foundation for future progress on disarmament and withdrawal – perhaps under a different Israeli government.