

## A Prescription for Peace in Gaza

We urge the Biden administration to utilize its leverage and present a clear framework to end the violence and suffering.

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*Since Hamas' October 7 attack triggered the most recent, brutal round of violence in [Gaza](#), the discourse surrounding the conflict has remained stunningly stagnant. Both sides find themselves emboldened at home.*

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's war cabinet continues to argue that its vicious military campaign is necessary to destroy Hamas and secure the release of over 100 Israeli hostages held in Gaza. Yet, it is becoming increasingly clear that neither goal will be achieved by force. Hamas and Palestinian factions, battered and divided, continue to call for a permanent cease-fire and the full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, the release of thousands of Palestinian detainees and prisoners, and an end to occupation—resulting in a Palestinian state. None of these goals appear to be achievable by force either. The international community, nearly unanimously, has been calling for a cease-fire which has been repeatedly rejected by Israel and its military and diplomatic backers in the White House.

While the discourse remains gridlocked, developments on the ground are not. Palestinian casualties, in the tens of thousands, are mounting daily. As physicians, we despair at the inability to recognize our common humanity as Gaza's healthcare system has totally collapsed, food and medicine are scarce, and nearly half of all buildings have been completely or partially destroyed, leaving 90% of Gazans displaced on uninhabitable lands facing famine and outbreaks of infectious diseases.

Of further concern, the violence has spilled over into Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen. Three U.S. troops were killed and more were injured in a recent drone attack in Jordan. The conflict is

positioned for further escalation, jeopardizing regional peace and threatening U.S. interests.

Physicians are frequently faced with difficult dilemmas, and we often advocate for plans to help treat conditions and alleviate suffering by weighing variables we can and cannot control. We believe there is a clear path to address the wants and needs of people in the region outside of war, not only resolving this round of violence but also setting the stage for lasting peace. The U.S. has tremendous leverage on all sides and enormous resources in the region, and we must bring them to bear now. We urge the Biden administration to utilize this leverage and present a clear framework to end the violence and suffering.

Our prescription for a framework leading to a peaceful resolution is:

1) An immediate cease-fire to stop the bloodshed on all sides and allow for desperately needed aid to enter Gaza while concurrently working with stakeholders and international partners to negotiate terms of a sustained peace agreement. Calls to limit civilian casualties, including limited pauses in fighting, have not been successful. Continued violence will only result in further suffering and complicate efforts to end the war.

2) An immediate exchange of hostages and detainee and prisoners. Both sides have negotiated such agreements with mediation provided by regional partners. In fact, CIA Director Bill Burns is already mediating constructive negotiations with the support of Qatar and Egypt. Several reports are indicating that both sides are closing in on a deal to release the hostages.

3) Advocating for Palestinians to govern Gaza and the West Bank. The Palestinian Authority, the Palestinian Liberation Organization, or a new technocratic Palestinian body can be tasked with governing the strip with power handed off from Hamas. Arab countries can play a role in providing security assurances in return for Israel withdrawing from Gaza and lifting the blockade to allow rebuilding of the strip.

4) Providing a clear and credible plan for resumption of peace talks on the basis of leading to a two-state solution in return for normalization of relations and security. Israel and the U.S. have made normalization between Israel and Arab countries a top priority. A two-state solution has been endorsed by the U.S. and nearly every country in the Middle East and is the clearest path for self-determination and an end of the occupation. The Biden administration can and should begin working toward the recognition of a Palestinian State and create the conditions necessary for Palestinians to self-govern free of military occupation.

While these ideas are not novel, we believe it is time for the Biden administration to publicly adopt and advance them. The inhumane status quo must not continue. The United States faces increasing isolation on the global stage in opposing a cease-fire and fueling the war with weapons. With the implementation of these steps, a path for lasting peace and prosperity in the region is possible.

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