

*Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024*

**Remarks Announcing a Cessation of Hostilities Between Israel and Hizballah in Lebanon and an Exchange With Reporters**

*November 26, 2024*

*The President.* Good afternoon.

Today I have some good news to report from the Middle East. I just spoke with the Prime Minister of Israel and Lebanon, and I'm pleased to announce that their governments have accepted the United States proposal to end the devastating conflict between Israel and Hizballah. And I want to thank President Macron of France for his partnership in reaching this moment.

For nearly 14 months, a deadly conflict raged across the border that separates Israel and Lebanon, a conflict that began the day after the October 7 attack by Hamas on Israel. Hours later, at 2 a.m. in the morning, Hizballah and other terrorist organizations backed by Iran attacked Israel in support of Hamas.

Let's be clear: Israel did not launch this war. The Lebanese people did not seek that war either, nor did the United States.

Over the past year, including in the days immediately following October the 7th, I directed the U.S. military to flow assets and capabilities into the region, including aircraft carriers, fighter squadrons, and sophisticated air defense battery to defend Israel and deter our common enemy at critical moments.

Since the war with Hizballah began, over 70,000 Israelis have been forced to live in refugee—live as refugees in their own country, helplessly watching their homes, their businesses, their communities as they were bombarded and destroyed. And over 300,000 Lebanese people have also been forced to live as refugees in their own country in a war imposed on them by Hizballah.

All told, this has been the deadliest conflict between Israel and Hizballah in decades.

How many of Hizballah's senior leaders are dead, including its longtime leader Nasrallah? And Israel has—and Israel has destroyed Hizballah's terrorist infrastructure in southern Lebanon as well, including miles of sophisticated tunnels, which were prepared for an October 7—style terrorist attack in northern Israel.

But lasting security for the people of Israel and Lebanon cannot be achieved only on the battlefield. And that's why I've directed my team to work with the governments of Israel and Lebanon to forge a cease-fire to bring the conflict between Israel and Hizballah to a close.

Under the deal reached today, effective at 4 a.m. tomorrow local time, the fighting across the Lebanese-Israeli border will end—will end. This is designed to be a permanent cessation of hostilities.

What is left of Hizballah and other terrorist organizations will not be allowed—will—I emphasize—will not be allowed to threaten the security of Israel again.

Over the next 60 days, the Lebanese Army and the State Security Forces will deploy and take control of their own territory once again. Hizballah terrorist infrastructure in southern Lebanon will not be allowed to be rebuilt.

And, over the next 60 days, Israel will gradually withdraw its remaining forces and civilians—civilians on both sides will soon be able to safely return to their communities and begin to rebuild their homes, their schools, their farms, their businesses, and their very lives.

We're determined, this conflict will not be just another cycle of violence. And so the United States, with the full support of France and our other allies, has pledged to work with Israel and Lebanon to ensure that these—this arrangement is fully implemented—the agreement totally implemented.

You know, there will be no U.S. troops deployed in southern Lebanon. This is consistent with my commitment to the American people to not put U.S. troops in combat in this conflict.

Instead, we, along with France and others, will provide the necessary assistance to make sure this deal is implemented fully and effectively.

Let us—let me be clear: If Hizballah or anyone else breaks the deal and poses a direct threat to Israel, then Israel retains the right to self-defense consistent with international law, just like any country when facing a terrorist group pledged to that country's destruction.

At the same time, this deal supports Lebanon's sovereignty. And so it heralds a new start for Lebanon, a country that I've seen most of over the years, a country with rich history and culture. If fully implemented, this deal can put Lebanon on a path toward a future that's worthy of its significant past.

And just as the Lebanese people deserve a future of security and prosperity, so do the people of Gaza. They too deserve an end to the fighting and displacement.

The people of Gaza have been through hell. Their world—their world is absolutely shattered. Far too many civilians in Gaza have suffered far too much. And Hamas has refused, for months and months, to negotiate a good-faith cease-fire and a hostage deal.

And so now Hamas has a choice to make. Their only way out is to release the hostages, including American citizens which they hold and, in the process, bring an end to the fighting, which would make possible a surge of humanitarian relief.

Over the coming days, the United States will make another push with Turkey, Egypt, Qatar, Israel, and others to achieve a cease-fire in Gaza with the hostages released and the end to the war without Hamas in power—that it becomes possible.

As for the broader Middle East region, today's announcement brings us closer to realizing the affirmative agenda that I've been pushing forward during my entire Presidency: a vision for the future of the Middle East where it's at peace and prosperous and integrated across borders; a future where Palestinians have a state of their own, one that fulfills its people's legitimate aspirations and one that cannot threaten Israel or harbor terrorist groups with backing from Iran; a future where Israelis and Palestinians enjoy equal measures of security, prosperity, and yes, dignity.

To that end, the United States remains prepared to conclude a set of historic deals with Saudi Arabia to include a security pact and economic assurances together with a credible pathway for establishing a Palestinian state and the full—the full—normalization of relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel, a desire they both have.

I believe this agenda remains possible. And, in my remaining time in office, I'll work tirelessly to advance this vision of—for an integrated, secure, and prosperous region, all of which—all of which strengthens America's national security.

Getting all this done will require making some hard choices.

Israel has been told on the—has been bold on the battlefield. Iran and its proxies have paid a very heavy price. Now Israel must be bold in turning tactical gains against Iran and its proxies into a coherent strategy that secure Israel's long-term—its long-term safety and advances a broader peace and prosperity in the region.

Today's announcement is a critical step in advancing that vision. And so I applaud the courageous decision by the leaders of Lebanon and Israel to end the violence.

It reminds us that peace is possible. Say that again: Peace is possible. As long as that is the case, I will not for a single moment stop working to achieve it.

God bless you all. And sorry to keep you waiting so long. May God protect our troops.

Thank you.

*Hamas-Israel Conflict in Gaza, Palestinian Territories*

*Q.* Mr. President, will you get a cease-fire in Gaza before leaving office?

*The President.* You ask me how I get a cease-fire in—I think so. I'm hoping. I'm praying.

*U.S. Diplomatic Efforts in the Middle East*

*Q.* How is this push any different from the previous ones?

*The President.* If you don't see that, you shouldn't be reporting. It's a lot different.

*Q.* Mr. President, what have you told the new administration?

*Q.* Did the President-elect play a role in this deal, Mr. President?

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:38 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel; and Prime Minister Najib Miqati of Lebanon. A reporter referred to President-elect Donald J. Trump.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Cessation of hostilities between Israel and Hizballah in Lebanon.

*Locations:* Washington, DC.

*Names:* Macron, Emmanuel; Miqati, Najib; Netanyahu, Benjamin.

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