

Board of Peace Issues Stark Warning as Gaza Crisis Reaches Breaking Point

The clock may be ticking on the fragile calm in Gaza.

A peace envoy is warning that the already-stalled effort to disarm Hamas is being squeezed from both directions, with Israel refusing to move forward under the current proposal and Hamas continuing activities that raise serious questions about whether the terror group is truly prepared to put down its weapons.

And if the ceasefire falls apart, the consequences could be catastrophic.

Nickolay Mladenov, the Board of Peace's highest representative for Gaza, delivered that sobering assessment Wednesday during a briefing before the United Nations Security Council, according to The Times of Israel.

At the center of the standoff is a disarmament proposal Hamas accepted on July 30. The framework would connect the terror group's gradual disarmament with a phased Israeli withdrawal from Gaza.

However, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu isn't buying it.

Netanyahu has rejected the proposal, arguing it offers no real assurance that Hamas will ultimately disarm. Israel has therefore refused to carry out the phased withdrawals contemplated under the plan, The Times of Israel reported.



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The result? A diplomatic process that was supposed to move quickly hasn't moved at all.

Hamas' acceptance was expected to open a 14-day period for hammering out a timeline for both disarmament and Israeli withdrawal. That negotiating window has yet to begin.

Mladenov told the Security Council that Israel instead needs to reaffirm commitments made under President Donald Trump's 20-point Gaza peace framework, which Netanyahu accepted in September before the ceasefire began the following month.

Israel's ongoing military operations have become another major flashpoint.

According to The Times of Israel, Mladenov and U.S. special envoy Jared Kushner met with Netanyahu in Jerusalem on Aug. 17 and attempted to persuade him to limit Israeli strikes to imminent threats. Netanyahu resisted, maintaining that Israel would continue targeting terrorists connected to Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, assault.

Mladenov argued that repeated strikes will not produce the long-term demilitarization Gaza requires.

Hamas isn't exactly making Israel's case for restraint any easier.

Mladenov also rebuked the terror organization for failing to completely halt its military activities. He pointed to weapons being carried, continued tunnel activity and interference with convoys as signs the process remains dangerously unstable.

Mladenov said conditions have dramatically improved since last year, but shelter remains a serious concern as a majority of Gaza's approximately 2 million residents continue living in tents, according to The Times of Israel. He sharply criticized Israel's restrictions on higher-quality shelter materials as

winter approaches.

So where does this go from here?

An election is approaching in Israel. Hamas still has weapons. Netanyahu is refusing a withdrawal plan he believes could leave the terror group standing. And international officials are increasingly warning that the diplomatic runway is growing shorter.

Mladenov's final warning cut straight through the political maneuvering: another full-scale escalation could become a "point of no return for everyone."

The ceasefire may still be holding.

But the question now is just how much strain it can take.

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