

Trump's war on Gaza

As we write, the Gaza ceasefire seems to be back on track. Palestinians going home, the UN, aid agencies, the families of Palestinians detained without trial in Israeli prisons, and families of Israeli captives awaiting release from Gaza all want the ceasefire to hold.

When Israel finally withdrew troops from the Netzarim Corridor which cuts Gaza in half, Palestinians streamed north. Their homes are in ruins. The economy is destroyed. They rely on aid promised as part of the ceasefire deal.

The World Health Organisation declared ***"The health system is ruined. Malnutrition is rising. The risk of famine persists. We urgently need systematic and sustained access and an end to restrictions on the entry of essential supplies."***



Rafah [Yousef Zaanoun/ActiveStills]



returning to Gaza City [Ali Jadallah/Anadolu]

Lorries carrying mobile homes, medical equipment and supplies, and bulldozers to clear rubble were denied entry into Gaza.

Hamas suspended the planned release of 3 hostages, because Israel obstructed aid including hundreds of thousands of tents. Israeli officials and negotiators even told the New York Times these complaints were accurate. At least 92 Palestinians have been killed and 822 wounded in *"direct targeting"* by the Israeli military since the ceasefire began. Israel has yet to negotiate on Phase 2 for a full withdrawal and release of all remaining hostages, as agreed.

Settlers

Israeli Jewish settlers live on illegal settlements built on stolen Palestinian land in the illegally occupied West Bank. But they also want Gaza. In 2005, former Israeli prime minister Sharon closed the Gaza settlements. The settlers see the war as their path back to Gaza. Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, the Religious Zionism leader who calls himself a *"fascist homophobe"*, threatens to leave the coalition when Phase 1 ends. Netanyahu relies on his support.

Trump wades in

Trump claims to be a peacemaker but acts like a bull in a china shop. He handed Israel \$7bn worth of US weapons and cancelled sanctions on extremist settlers in the West Bank. He gave Hamas an ultimatum to release "all" hostages by Saturday or face total war. He unleashed a plan for the US to own Gaza and build a *Riviera of the Middle East* there, with no Gazans. He said they could move to Egypt, Jordan, or anywhere else. **The settlers loved it, and so did Netanyahu. Trump's plan has put the entire ceasefire in jeopardy. His tilt to the settlers has lasting impact.**