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Netanyahu, Trump Push for Gaza Ceasefire in DC Talks

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Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu traveled to Washington this week for high-stakes talks with Donald Trump, as efforts to end the 21-month war in Gaza gathered momentum. The meeting, held behind closed doors at the White House, underscored the United States' central role in trying to broker a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas while balancing broader regional tensions.

He added that Israel and the U.S. were in close contact to find countries willing to host displaced Palestinians.

Trump, who has maintained strong support for Netanyahu since returning to office, echoed optimism about regional cooperation. "We've had great cooperation from surrounding countries, great cooperation from every single one of them," he said, suggesting a breakthrough could be near.

Yet the path to peace remains complex. In Doha, Qatar's capital, Israeli and Hamas negotiators continued indirect talks on a phased ceasefire agreement. The proposal calls for releasing hostages in stages, withdrawing Israeli troops from parts of Gaza, and eventually ending the conflict. Hamas insists it will not release the remaining captives, around 50 in total, without a permanent end to fighting. Israel, for its part, refuses to halt military operations until Hamas is dismantled.

The Gaza war, triggered by Hamas's deadly October 2023 attack on southern Israel, has devastated the coastal enclave. More than 37,000 – 40,000 Palestinians have died, and much of Gaza's population has been forced from their homes. The United Nations has warned that nearly half a million people are on the brink of famine.

During his stay, Netanyahu also met with U.S. officials, including Marco Rubio and Steve Witkoff, who is due to join the negotiations in Qatar this week. As the talks continue, both Israeli and American leaders face mounting pressure to secure a deal that will finally bring relief to millions of civilians caught in the conflict.

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