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**Middle East**

# **Palestine: still on the brink of catastrophe**

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**The second phase of the ceasefire agreement should come into force next week, but it will probably be postponed by Israel. In a break with plans, Benjamin Netanyahu and his cabinet have suspended the release of 600 Palestinians under the terms of the agreement until further notice.**

The pretext for refusing the release is Hamas's 'staging' of the release of the Israeli prisoners. The Israeli authorities denounced a degrading ritual - even though it resembled in every way those of previous releases, the difference being that one of the Israeli prisoners kissed two fighters on the forehead before being handed over to the Red Cross. This 'provocation', as the Israelis put it, caused a stir in the international press, but as usual much more so than the degrading conditions in which the Palestinian prisoners were released, often mutilated, injured and emaciated, with the Israeli police preventing the celebrations with tear gas.

## The pressure continues on the releases

As agreed, Hamas also returned the bodies of three members of the Bibas family. Hamas indicated that these captives had been killed by a bombardment in November 2023 - this had already been announced at the time. But Israel accused Hamas of deliberately killing the hostages 'with their bare hands'. This version was also widely reported in the Western media, as if we had already forgotten the lies about babies being beheaded or put in ovens.

The pressure game continues on the part of Israeli society and above all its government, with the explicit or tacit support of the imperialist leaders, against the backdrop of a possible resumption of the bombardments, while there is still a 7th wave of releases (out of 8) before phase 2 of the ceasefire, which we do not really know if it is going to start or not since the negotiations have stalled. It is therefore very possible that the bombings will resume despite pressure from the United States. Moreover, Trump seems to have abandoned his plan for ethnic cleansing in Gaza. He does not have the political means to pressure countries like Egypt and Jordan to accept the Palestinians at the risk of their own stability in the very short term.

## In the West Bank, settlement continues

Meanwhile, in the town of Jenin, the Israeli army has deployed tanks for the first time in 23 years. The Israeli army has also extended its offensive into the north of the West Bank in the town of Qabatiya. Israeli bulldozers immediately began ripping out water pipes in the streets. Israel's war minister admitted that Israeli forces had expelled 40,000 Palestinians from three refugee camps in Jenin and Tulkarem, a figure reported by UNRWA several weeks ago. He said that the refugee camps were now 'empty of residents' and that 'UNRWA's activities in the camps have also been halted', claiming that he had ordered the Israeli army not to allow camp residents to return to their homes for a whole year. 'We will not return to the reality of the past', he declared. 'We will continue to cleanse the refugee camps and other centres of terror in order to dismantle the terrorist battalions and infrastructure'. This is ethnic cleansing and the extension of colonisation.

Israel does not want peace and remains confident in its impunity, particularly in the West Bank. It is this impunity that we, for our part, must absolutely challenge, because the future of the Palestinian people as a whole is at stake.

[L'Anticapitaliste](#) 27 February 2025

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