Hamas says it will postpone hostage release, blaming Israel

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Israel's Defence Minister Israel Katz called the Hamas announcement a "complete violation of the ceasefire agreement".Key Israeli ally US President Donald Trump has suggested the ceasefire should be cancelled if "all" the hostages held in Gaza are not returned by Saturday.I'd say they ought to be returned by 12 o'clock on Saturday... all of them, not in dribs and drabs, not two and one and three and four and two," he said."I'm speaking for myself," he stressed. "Israel can override it."

Seventy-three hostages taken during Hamas's attack on Israel on 7 October 2023, and three others taken a decade earlier, are still being held in Gaza.If hostages were not released, Trump added, "All hell is going to break out."Asked whether he meant retaliation from Israel, he said: "You'll find out, and they'll find out too. Hamas will find out what I mean."Katz said he had ordered the Israel Defense Forces to "prepare at the highest level of alert for any possible scenario in Gaza and to protect the communities".

"We will not allow a return to the reality of 7 October," the Israeli defence minister added.Hamas's announcement came shortly before people gathered in Tel Aviv to mark the 24th birthday of Israeli hostage Alon Ohel, his second in captivity.He was taken hostage from the Nova festival on 7 October 2023.Mia Goldstein, an attendee at the rally for Ohel, told the BBC there should be "immense pressure" to get the rest of hostages out, adding Hamas's delay was "horrifying".

Michal Neeman, who took part in a protest in Tel Aviv following the announcement from Hamas, said the hostages "should have been out a few months ago. You see the situation, they are dying there, and their blood is on this government's hands".UN spokesperson Farhan Haq said "any delays" to the fragile ceasefire deal would be an issue and all parties involved should adhere to their previously stated agreements and timelines.

Hamas has said the "door remains open" to the exchange going ahead on Saturday if Israel "complies" with its obligations, according to news agency AFP.Hamas spokesman Abu Obeida accused Israel of delaying the return of displaced Palestinians to the north of Gaza, firing on people and failing to allow in agreed humanitarian aid.The militant group's statement is the latest in a series of recriminatory actions between the two sides.

Israel delayed by two days allowing displaced Palestinians to return to the north of Gaza, accusing Hamas of reneging on a commitment to free a female Israeli civilian hostage.Israel also recently briefly delayed buses taking Palestinian prisoners to be released into the occupied West Bank, after expressing anger over the way in which hostages were released through crowds of spectators in Gaza hours earlier.

On Friday, Hamas exceeded by a short time a deadline to release the names of hostages to be freed on Saturday - as required under the ceasefire - prompting concern in Israel. This came after it accused Israel of failing to abide by its commitment to boost the amount of humanitarian aid allowed into Gaza –contradicting what had been described by the UN's humanitarian chief as a "massive surge".

Since the ceasefire began on 19 January, 16 Israeli and five Thai hostages have been released in exchange for 566 prisoners.By the end of the first stage of the ceasefire in three weeks' time, 33 hostages and 1,900 prisoners are expected to have been freed. Israel says eight of the 33 are dead.Hamas took 251 hostages and killed about 1,200 people when it attacked in October 2023. Israel launched a military campaign in response, killing at least 48,000

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