



By: TA | AP Brief

Israel reopening Gaza's border crossing with Egypt on Sunday



Israel said that it will reopen the pedestrian **border crossing** between the Gaza Strip and Egypt over the weekend, marking an important step forward for U.S. President Donald Trump's Gaza ceasefire plan.

COGAT, the Israeli military body in charge of coordinating aid to Gaza, said in a statement that starting on Sunday a "limited movement of people only" would be allowed through the Rafah crossing, Gaza's main gateway to the outside world.

The announcement followed statements from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and **Ali Shaath**, newly appointed to head the Palestinian administrative committee governing Gaza's daily affairs, that it would likely open soon.

While COGAT said the passage will open in both directions on Sunday, Shaath said the first day will be a trial for operations and that travel both ways will start Monday.

Israel as of Friday agreed to allow up to 150 people to leave each day — 50 medical patients with two family members, an official familiar with the situation told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were discussing diplomatic talks.

Up to 50 people who fled during the war can return daily, the source said.

Roughly 20,000 sick and wounded Palestinians need treatment outside Gaza, according to the territory's health ministry. Gaza's health system was decimated in the war, rendering advanced surgical procedures out of reach.

COGAT said both Israel and Egypt will vet individuals for exit and entry through the crossing, which will be supervised by European Union border patrol agents.

In addition to screenings at the crossing, Palestinians leaving and returning will be screened by Israel in the adjacent corridor, which remains under Israeli military control.

Ceasefire agreement

The crossing has been under a near complete closure since Israel seized it in May 2024, saying the step was part of a strategy to halt cross-border arms smuggling by Hamas.

It was briefly opened for the evacuation of medical patients during a short-lived ceasefire in early 2025.

Israel had resisted reopening the crossing, but the recovery of the remains of the last **hostage in Gaza** on Monday cleared the way to move forward.

The reopening is one of the first steps in the second phase of last year's U.S.-brokered ceasefire agreement

A day later, Netanyahu said the crossing would soon open in a limited and controlled fashion.

Thousands of Palestinians inside Gaza are trying to leave the war-battered territory, while tens of thousands who fled the territory during the heaviest fighting say they want to return home.

The reopening is one of the first steps in the second phase of last year's U.S.-brokered ceasefire agreement, which includes challenging issues ranging from demilitarizing Gaza to putting in place an alternative government to oversee rebuilding the mostly destroyed enclave.

Netanyahu said this week that Israel's focus is on disarming Hamas and destroying its remaining tunnels. Without these steps, he said that there would be no reconstruction in Gaza, a stance that could make Israel's control over Rafah a key point of leverage.