



By: TA | AP Insight

Kushner has begun a new Washington effort to salvage the Gaza road map



U.S. negotiator and President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner held a rare meeting with the Hamas chief on Sunday in a new diplomatic effort to make progress in the stalled Gaza ceasefire. Kushner will meet with Israel's prime minister on Monday.

The talks aim to salvage the new **15-point, U.S.-backed road map** for Hamas to disarm in Gaza and Israel to withdraw from the Palestinian territory shattered by war.

At stake are the lives of some 2 million people in Gaza and the reconstruction of the crowded enclave now largely controlled by Israeli forces, more than 10 months since the ceasefire ended major military operations.

A meeting between Kushner, fellow envoy Steve Witkoff and Hamas leaders in Egypt last year helped clinch the **ceasefire**, whose progress until now had been stalled over the key issue of Hamas' disarmament.

The rare meeting in Egypt with Hamas' Khalil al-Hayya was confirmed by a regional official and a Hamas official, both speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to reporters.

Kushner was one of a trio of envoys meeting with al-Hayya, with officials from mediating countries Egypt, Qatar and Turkey also there.

Israeli Prime Minister **Benjamin Netanyahu** last week rejected the 15-point plan in a rare public show of defiance against the Trump administration, Israel's closest ally.

Now Kushner, former British prime minister Tony Blair and the director of the U.S.-created **Board of Peace** overseeing the ceasefire, Nickolay Mladenov, are set to meet with Netanyahu on Monday, according to a source familiar with the plans and a diplomatic source. Both spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss a closed-door meeting.

Regional powers accuse Israel of obstructing peace efforts

Ahead of Monday's meeting, several regional powers including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates issued a statement condemning Israel's rejection of the road map, saying that "Israel now bears responsibility for obstructing the efforts to bring peace in Gaza." Other signers included Jordan, Pakistan, Indonesia and the ceasefire mediators.

The statement by foreign ministers also called on the Board of Peace and the U.S. to take "immediate and concrete measures" to keep any party from obstructing the plan's implementation.

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Kushner's meeting with the Hamas leader aimed at ensuring the militant group's commitment to the road map, particularly disarmament, before his meeting with Netanyahu, the regional official said.

The Hamas official said the group is committed and waiting for mediators to start the 14-day negotiation period to work out a timetable for implementation. That period requires all parties' approval of the road map to begin.

The Hamas official also said the Hamas leader demanded that Israel halt its attacks on Gaza and withdraw to the so-called "**yellow line**" dividing the territory before beginning implementation.

The yellow line was never precisely defined. Israeli forces have moved beyond it and now control about 60% of Gaza.

In May, Netanyahu said the next step was to move to 70% control, with Israel "tightening the grip" on Hamas "from every direction."

The White House had no

comment on the talks

The White House referred questions about Kushner's meetings to the Board of Peace, which did not immediately comment. The Tony Blair Institute did not comment.

Under the road map, Hamas would hand over weapons to the Palestinian technocratic committee meant to oversee daily operations in the territory.



Israel will not retreat from any position in Gaza until Hamas has been completely disarmed - Benjamin Netanyahu

The committee has not yet entered Gaza. But Hamas has linked the surrender of its heaviest weapons to the creation of a Palestinian state, something Israel's current government rejects.

The road map involves Hamas gradually giving up its weapons while Israeli forces halt attacks and begin withdrawing from Gaza.

But Netanyahu says Israel will not retreat from any position in Gaza until Hamas has been completely disarmed.

That stance leaves other elements of the ceasefire, including reconstruction and the deployment of **international forces** to separate Israeli forces from committee-controlled areas, on hold.

Netanyahu faces a challenging election on Oct. 27 as he tries to hold on to power with a coalition that includes ministers taking a harsh line on Gaza, and it's not clear whether he will take decisive steps on the ceasefire before

then.

Also coming up is the anniversary of the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas-led attack on southern Israel that sparked the war.

Netanyahu's Likud party on Sunday responded to the statement by regional powers by claiming that "Arab states want to topple" Netanyahu so that centrist challenger Gadi Eisenkot and center-left party leader Yair Golan "will give them everything they want. That will not happen."