

Israel, Hamas agree deal for 4-day truce

November 22, 2023

Online Desk: Hamas and Israel have agreed to a four-day truce in Gaza during which Hamas will release 50 women and children held as hostages in exchange for the release of 150 Palestinian women and children held in Israeli jails, the Palestinian group said in a statement on Wednesday.

The deal, mediated by Qatar and Egypt, will allow hundreds of humanitarian, medical and fuel aid trucks to enter all parts of the Gaza Strip, the statement added.

During the four-day truce, air traffic will completely stop in southern Gaza and will halt for six hours a day, from 10:00 a.m. to 04:00 p.m. (local time), in northern Gaza, the statement said, reports Reuters.

Hamas is believed to be holding more than 200 hostages, taken when its fighters surged into Israel on Oct. 7, killing 1,200 people, according to Israeli tallies.

A statement by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Office held out the hope of more hostages being released.

It said that after the first 50 were released over four days, the pause in fighting would be extended for another day for every additional 10 hostages released. The statement did not mention the release of Palestinian prisoners in exchange.

"Israel's government is committed to return all the hostages home. Tonight, it approved the proposed deal as a first stage to achieving this goal," said the statement, released after hours of deliberation that were closed to the press.

Israeli bombardments have flattened swathes of Hamas-ruled Gaza, killed 13,300 civilians in the tiny densely populated enclave and left about two-thirds of its 2.3 million people homeless, according to authorities in Gaza.