

PRELIMINARY CEASEFIRES

OVERVIEW: PRELIMINARY CEASEFIRES

DEFINITION

A preliminary ceasefire is a formal agreement in which conflict parties commit to a verifiable halt in hostilities and a series of military actions to de-escalate the military situation on the battlefield and significantly transform the patterns of interaction between the parties.

- A preliminary ceasefire is typically a negotiated agreement that is more detailed and formal than a cessation of hostilities.
- A preliminary ceasefire also contains other provisions to de escalate tensions.

Important - key provisions in preliminary ceasefires must be in some way verifiable.

VERIFICATION

Preliminary ceasefires will include a monitoring and verification approach to keep track of the agreed upon provisions. May

- Requires the establishment of specific ceasefire management and verification organizations and capabilities.

DIFFERENTIATION FROM PERMANENT CEASEFIRE

- A preliminary ceasefire prepares the ground for the final settlement process.
- A preliminary ceasefire signals the parties willingness to move towards the final settlement process.
- A preliminary ceasefire is not intended to last indefinitely or be a permanent solution.

- A preliminary ceasefire does not address the underlying causes of the conflict.
- But unlike most humanitarian ceasefire and cessation of hostilities agreements, they are normally designed to last for an extended period and endure the inevitable violations that almost always occur.
- A preliminary ceasefire occurs prior to, or during political negotiations.
- Note that a preliminary ceasefire is not a guaranteed step in the peace process, although negotiating amidst conflict may be very difficult.

FUNCTIONS OF A PRELIMINARY CEASEFIRE

- Firstly, preliminary ceasefires play an important role creating an environment more conducive to negotiations.
- Secondly, agreeing to a monitored and verified suspension of hostilities is often an important confidence building measure, that sends a strong signal of peaceful intent and helps to build trust and connections between the military forces.
- Thirdly, preliminary ceasefires provide a good opportunity for the conflict parties to establish communication, connections and experience working together.
- Finally, a preliminary ceasefire can provide an opportunity to build popular support for the peace process.