



German embargo cuts into IDF's Gaza war plans

Power brokers in no rush to save hostages; politicians unhappy with pace of IDF's prep

Amos Harel

The cumulative signs are not good. A week after Hamas positively replied to the mediators' proposal for a partial hostage deal in preparation for a full deal that would end the war, Israel continues to waste time.

This is happening despite the clear reports about the desperate condition of the 20 hostages who are still held in the Gaza Strip's tunnels, along with the bodies of 30 more held by Hamas. There are reports about intentions to resume the talks, this time at a different site.

No one seems to be in a hurry – at least not on this issue.

The preparations for the military operation to take control of Gaza City are proceeding normally, and U.S. President Donald Trump continues to fully support Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. On Friday, Trump speculated about the deaths of some of the hostages. Israel vehemently denies this assertion. The claim that the military operation will also succeed in defeating Hamas and magically force it to give up at the last minute and return the hostages alive does not align with everything we have

seen so far. Military pressure has value, but Hamas has never entirely given up.

Anyone insisting otherwise is reminiscent of the White Queen from "Alice in Wonderland," who trains herself to believe in at least six impossible things before breakfast.

Netanyahu, meanwhile, is displeased with the drab name the military deliberately chose for the operation,

IDF planes strike Yemen

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Gideon's Chariots II. The prime minister reportedly prefers "Iron Fist", despite, or perhaps because of, its fascist connotations.

In the television news studios, reservist officers are fighting over the credit for the operation's planning, which has not yet actually started, even though its predecessor produced limited results.

Conversely, the entire international community – except the Americans – has condemned Israel's inten-

tions. Legal experts warn that leveling Gaza City exposes the participants in the operation to personal legal risk worldwide. That doesn't bother Defense Minister Israel Katz, another man urgently seeking a place on the front bench at the court in The Hague. He says that Gaza City will look like Beit Hanoun, a city already totally destroyed, after the operation.

The military preparations are underway, but not at a pace that pleases the cabinet ministers. Channel 12 News reported that Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich excoriated IDF Chief of Staff Lt.-Gen. Eyal Zamir at a cabinet meeting when the latter dared to say that the army cannot estimate how much time it would need to forcibly evacuate the population from Gaza City.

We're talking about a million people, and military officials say they think that 30 percent will refuse evacuation under any scenario, at least before the army enters. But Smotrich already reprimanded Zamir: "We instructed you to take quick action. For my part, you will surround them. Whoever doesn't evacuate, don't give them water or electricity. Let them starve to death or

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Relatives mourning at Al-Shifa Hospital on Sunday.

Saeed M. M. T. Juras/Anadolu Agency

IDF: Leverage pressure on Hamas to seize a hostage-release deal, even a partial one

Jack Khoury and Jonathan Lis

IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir and military representatives told Israeli leaders late last week that they believe that Israel should exploit the leverage it has achieved over Hamas and accept a deal to release the hostages, even a partial deal.

Zamir's position, which was presented to cabinet ministers, is that additional

military pressure on Hamas in the form of conquering Gaza would take a substantial amount of time, lead to casualties among soldiers and hostages and would further stretch the burden on the military's network of reservists.

Military brass are critical of the political leadership for not leveraging this pressure that the army achieved, like conquering Rafah and evacuating residents from

southern Gaza, to get the hostages released. So, they recommend seizing the opportunity for a hostage-release deal before launching a significant operation like conquering Gaza City.

Meanwhile, Qatar and Egypt, the mediators in the cease-fire negotiations, have been pressuring Israel to agree to the proposal approved by Hamas. However, they feel they can't prevent the capture of Gaza City,

Palestinian sources involved in the talks told Haaretz on Sunday.

The United States has agreed to Israel's decision to take control of Gaza City, said sources. As a result, according to reports, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is expected to convene the security cabinet on Tuesday to discuss the possibility of restarting the talks on a hostage deal and ending the war.

The members of the secu-

riety cabinet will meet for the first time since Hamas gave its agreement and since Netanyahu approved the IDF's plan to take control of Gaza City last week. Netanyahu is expected to approve sending his negotiating team to continue the talks at a location as yet to be determined, with the joint mediation of Qatar, Egypt and the United States. Israel has said the renewal

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PM aims to hide truth about Gaza famine from Israelis

Nir Hasson

Many low points have been recorded throughout the war in Gaza. A few days ago, another was added. An international expert body on food security determined that Israel is responsible for famine in Gaza, at the most severe level possible:

Phase 5, with "reasonable evidence."

According to the report published by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, famine currently exists in the Gaza Governorate and is expected to spread southward into other parts of

the enclave. To understand how severe this is, consider which countries have experienced Phase 5 famine in the 21st century. All of them are in Africa. The most recent was Sudan in 2023. Others include Ethiopia, South Sudan and Somalia. In Yemen, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria, famine was declared at lower levels.

For official Israel, the re-

port represents a political and public diplomacy disaster. In recent days, a large team of government officials and military officers has worked intensively to find flaws in the report. The campaign to undermine it began even before its release, led by the Prime Minister's Office, the Foreign Ministry, the Defense Ministry, and the Diaspora Affairs Ministry.

Much of the Israeli media quickly echoed the official line, portraying the report as biased, agenda-driven and unreliable.

It's hard to believe the global community will be convinced, but that was never the goal. The real purpose is to hide the truth from the Israeli public – the truth about what is being done in its name. That reality is already

evident in virtual visits to Gaza's clinics, such as those featured in a Haaretz weekend article that coincided with the report's publication.

To understand both the report and Israel's attempts to discredit it, it is necessary to understand what the IPC is. The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification

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Shamm Qudeih, a severely malnourished 2-year-old girl, at Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis, this month.

Mariam Dagga/AP

A train ride shows how Israelis have normalized the unthinkable



Commuters waiting for a bus at Tel Aviv's Savidor train station after the sudden closure of major rail lines disrupted transportation across the country.

Itai Ron

Linda Dayan

For those who do not have their ear to the train platform, rail service in Tel Aviv is partially suspended this week due to accidents and maintenance work. After hearing so many stories about the chaos, I decided to investigate it for myself and take the train to Jerusalem.

This could not have come

at a worse time. Summer break is at its peak, with exhausted parents looking to ferry their children to the next air-conditioned diversion. With trains canceled and delayed, it means more cars on the road, which means even more traffic on our already very congested highways.

By the time I got to Haganah station in Tel Aviv's south side, there was already a Channel 12 News crew setting up. The hot, stuffy station was bursting with passengers who would have alighted at the next train stop, Hashalom, the country's busiest, which is now closed. They were spit out here instead. A sheepish young station worker handed out ice pops to travelers coming through the turnstile – an

apricot-flavored apology for an arduous journey.

My train was neither canceled nor delayed, and because I was traveling in the middle of the day it was not terribly packed. I felt a bit cheated out of the chaos that I had been promised, but relieved that I wouldn't have to relive the sardine can that is the New York City subway at rush hour. But Jerusalem more than made up for it: Because of work on the tracks, the light rail wouldn't be stopping at the central train station.

My experience is not indicative of the new traveling norm, in which cancellations, transfers and hours-long delays have become commonplace. To date, the ice pops are as far as the authorities have gone when it comes to accountability to the public. When confronted about this phenomenon, Transportation Minister Miri Regev denied that any chaos was occurring at all and promptly left the country for a vacation.

This is, more or less, an allegory for life in Israel lately. Everything has teetered on the edge of intolerable for so long that it has become normal, and we are

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Zain Jaqfar/AFP

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Bribery, breach of trust and contact with foreign agent

Retired IDF general questioned over role in Qatargate affair

Bar Peleg

Maj. Gen. (res.) Yoav (Poli) Mordechai was questioned on Thursday in the affair linking Qatar to senior aides and associates in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Office.

He was released by police under limited conditions and under suspicion of bribery, breach of trust and contact with a foreign agent.

After the questioning, Mordechai was temporarily suspended from his position as the deputy to the IDF's Missing and Captive Soldiers Division, headed by Maj. Gen. (res.) Nitzan Alon.

The police attribute the suspicions of bribery and breach of trust because they view Mordechai as a public figure, given his high-profile position in his reserve duty. Suspicions against Mordechai have recently grown stronger, according to a source with law enforcement who spoke with Haaretz, who said that the version of events given in his first investigation was weakened, leading to his summoning for a second round of questioning.

Haaretz has learned that the police have questioned

employees at a company owned by Mordechai, which Haaretz has exposed as a funnel transferring funds from Qatar to associates of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. In its investigation, the police confiscated computers and documents from the company.

Some of the employees who were questioned have

Uprooting trees is a war crime

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been released under conditions of suspension from the company. Some suspects were interrogated by the Shin Bet security service, and one of Mordechai's partners, a former senior Mossad official, was arrested and questioned in May.

In a statement issued on his behalf following the investigation, Mordechai stated: "Throughout my entire career, I have always been strict with the provisions of the law, and I have assisted the State of Israel whenever necessary."

"Here too, even though

everything was done openly, transparently, and reported as mandated by law, I will do whatever is necessary to assist law enforcement authorities to reach the truth, and will act in accordance with their instructions, if only due to the fact that reaching the truth will prove no flaw was found in the conduct," he added in the statement.

Mordechai was initially summoned for questioning after Haaretz revealed in May that the connection between Qatar and Israel "Sru'lik" Einhorn and Yonatan Urlich was conducted through a British company owned by a former Mossad officer suspected in the affair.

The British firm is a subsidiary of an Israeli company owned by Mordechai and other former senior defense officials. It was set up to serve as a conduit for funds for work done on behalf of Gulf states that were unprepared or unable to work directly with Israeli companies and banks.

The company reported earnings of over 38 million shekels (\$11 million)

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