

Special Report 118, Israel Under Attack



The picture above is of two male abductees returned to their families. To date, 133 abductees remain in Hamas' tunnels. Scores of them are feared dead. The women among them are exposed to repeated sexual harassment. The elderly lack life and health-sustaining medication. Hamas continues to demand Israel cease all hostilities and withdraw from Gaza following which it promises to release 20 abductees – alive or dead.

Israel has conceded yet again and now offers Hamas an extended ceasefire and the return of civilians to the northern part of Gaza in exchange for 20 live abductees (according to some reports, 33) which are to include children, women, the elderly and the wounded. Eighteen countries, all of whom have citizens among the abductees, call on Hamas to agree: Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Columbia, Denmark, France, Hungary, Germany, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Thailand, the UK, and the US. Hamas insists it will only consider a partial release of abductees in exchange for a complete ceasefire, Israel's withdrawal from Gaza and international enlistment for the restoration of Gaza.

A recent offer Hamas tendered the full release of the abductees, dead or alive, in exchange for the creation of a Palestinian State within the 1967 borders, a five year ceasefire at the outset of which Hamas would be made part of the Palestinian police and military apparatus. We all know how Hamas took control of Gaza by killing and maiming Palestinian Authority officials, throwing them off rooftops and kneecapping them. In other words, Hamas proposes a lengthy ceasefire in the course of which it will take over the Palestinian Authority and its police and military apparatus and at the end of which it would be free to attack Israel once again. Needless to say, Israel cannot and will not accede to such an offer.

Israel has announced if Hamas will not relent, it will commence the relocation of civilians from Rafah preparatory to sending its forces into the area, the last bastion of Hama's military capability. Israeli troops will continue endeavoring to minimize civilian casualties by moving Palestinians. Israel plans to proceed in phases, evacuating neighborhoods to areas that have food, water, shelter and medical services before advancing. The operations will also be more targeted than in the past. Egyptian officials briefed on Israel's plans say moves will be coordinated with Egyptian officials so as to secure the Egypt-Gaza border.

Israel's military mobilized two reserve brigades for deployment to Gaza. The Israeli Defense Ministry has procured 40,000 tents and, with Egypt, is setting up extensive campsites. The Egyptian Red Crescent, a member of the Geneva-based International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, has erected tents in the nearby Gaza city of Khan Younis.

In Gaza, Hamas is doing its utmost to create and promote hunger among civilians in Gaza because it serves its purposes so well. To enable free access to supplied air-dropped, Israeli forces move out of drop areas. Hamas militants move in, shoot at civilians and seek to take control of the supplies.

A Palestinian Media Watch dispatch published on Sunday Fatah, the senior faction in the Palestinian Authority charged Hamas with targeting aid workers, stealing aid and manufacturing a food crisis in Gaza. "Hamas' persecution of any party who is a source for distributing the [humanitarian] aid or securing it began from the start of the war, as Hamas persecuted well-known figures and teams of volunteers on the ground in mid-October [2023]. It attacked and killed some of them for two reasons: First, to prevent any activity by any [other] party in the Gaza Strip; and second, to ensure Hamas' control over the aid and its storage, which of course leads to these crazy and unreal prices that no one can pay in the shadow of this destruction.

"After the occupation [i.e. Israel, *BM*] bombed storehouses controlled by Hamas, the accumulation of tons of various food and aid products that Hamas had taken became clear, at a time when the Gaza Strip is suffering from hunger." Footage from an Al-Jazeera TV interview was played, showing a woman complaining: "the aid isn't reaching all the people" because the aid "is all to their [own] homes. Let Hamas catch me and shoot me and do what they want to me." In one recorded call, a Gazan civilian testified that Hamas murdered his cousin because he tried to seek help from UNRWA. Another civilian said he dare not leave his home because he fears Hamas will seize and use it to fire on Israelis troops, who will then destroy his house.

The United Nation published a report according to which 50% of the civilian population in Gaza faces dire hunger circumstances, 38% are likely to suffer crucial shortage of food and 12% with significant shortages. However, these figures are based on information provided by the Hamas Health Authority and are notoriously unreliable. Between 150-200 truck carrying food and other humanitarian aid enter Gaza on a daily basis, which constitute an 80% rise in the number of trucks that entered the Strip prior to the attack on Israel, not to speak of the airdrops and the supplies brought in by sea. United Nation officials in Gaza testify to the fact that they are swamped and unable to cope with the large number of trucks at the border, just inside Gaza. Markets in southern Gaza are inundated with produce. The UN report further states that less than a quart of water per day is available to the civilians, however the desalination plants and a water pipe the Emirates funded provides water from Israel, together amounting to 20 quarts daily.

Our next Special report, to be published tomorrow, will address the widespread campus protests