

# Israel at a crossroads in Gaza: A deal or a new military phase?

written by Meir Ben Shabbat | 01.07.2025

Meir Ben Shabbat: The choice is not simply hostage release versus ending the war, but rather hostage release versus preserving Hamas. This is the implication of an overall deal for the release of all hostages in line with conditions that Hamas is demanding. These conditions include a complete cessation of combat with international guarantees, withdrawal to the Oct. 6, 2023, lines, the rebuilding of Gaza and the release of Palestinian security prisoners.

The blow that Hamas took from Israel is indeed severe, but it is not mortal and not irreversible. Hamas's ability to pose an immediate significant threat to Israel in terms of rocket fire or a ground attack in the style of October 7th has probably been denied. It has lost many of its personnel, its means of combat and production, but one should not learn from this about its recovery capacity.

Hamas is still the main power in Gaza. Its fighters and leaders operate mainly in tunnels, take few risks, act in a guerrilla-like manner when opportunities arise, and wait for the moment they can safely emerge above ground.

Published in JNS, July 01, 2025.

