The solution: Trump’s voluntary migration plan

written by Meir Ben Shabbat | 24.07.2025

As of this writing, Israel has recalled its negotiating team from Qatar “for consultations” after receiving Hamas’s latest response to the updated compromise proposal. This reply came after considerable foot-dragging, tougher demands, and even mocking public remarks by Hamas spokesmen in recent days.

The terrorist group has been buoyed by global reactions to the “starvation in Gaza” campaign and plans to exploit it further to pressure Israel into easing its terms for ending the war. In the meantime, Hamas is leveraging this narrative to pursue three immediate goals: reducing Israeli military pressure in Gaza, reasserting its control over civilian aid entering the Strip, and bolstering its public standing by rallying support around what it presents as a grassroots and media-driven struggle under its auspices.

In an official statement, Hamas called for mass protest actions “in all capitals and cities around the world on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday until the siege is lifted and the starvation ends.” It’s safe to assume Hamas won’t let this opportunity slip by and would rather have images of Gaza’s suffering dominate global news broadcasts, even at the cost of delaying immediate relief for the civilian population.

Hamas’s success in thrusting the Gaza issue back into the global spotlight, after being eclipsed by the war in Iran and developments in southern Syria, has reinforced within the group’s leadership the sense that the overall momentum is shifting against Israel and in its favor. “We are in the midst of a war of attrition. Hamas’s tools, combined with our religious faith, offset the IDF’s power. Time and attrition work in our favor,” senior Islamic Jihad official Mohammad al-Hindi told Al Jazeera recently. While not a member of Hamas, his comments reflect the prevailing mood at the top of the organization.

Hamas is paying close attention to reports from Israel about signs of fatigue and growing public sensitivity to IDF casualties. They’ve also picked up on indications of impatience from US President Donald Trump, who appears to view the war in Gaza as a hindrance to his broader regional ambitions.

The terror group's leaders are also monitoring developments inside Israel and consider early elections a real possibility. They assume Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will want to enter that campaign with achievements such as the return of hostages and further normalization agreements. Linking those achievements to a ceasefire strengthens Hamas's bargaining position.

A mental safety net

Conditions in Gaza are difficult for Hamas operatives on the ground, but not unbearable. Their main task is survival, aided by tunnels and humanitarian aid. The organization's leadership knows it can end the suffering at any time by agreeing to a deal, thereby buying itself time to regroup. This awareness serves as a mental safety net, protecting them from collapse.

Judging by its behavior, Hamas seems to believe the threat to its survival has lessened, though it hasn't disappeared entirely. Despite the challenges, the group still functions as an organization, managing effective coordination between its leadership factions and various arms.

Hamas remains the dominant power in Gaza, shaping the narrative through its operatives and media channels, disseminating instructions to the public via Telegram, and enforcing its authority, albeit partially, through semi-official violent mechanisms. There is no alternative to its rule, and despite the hardships, it still enjoys considerable support. The hostages it holds fuel the hope among its ranks of regaining full control of Gaza and rebuilding its devastated infrastructure.

From this analysis, Hamas concludes that compromise is unwise at this stage. Its leadership believes that the more complicated the Gaza situation becomes for Israel, the more pressure Netanyahu will face, internally and externally, to show flexibility. To achieve this, Hamas is acting on multiple fronts: on the ground, by intensifying attacks on IDF troops and attempting kidnappings; diplomatically, by amplifying public protests and international criticism of Israel over deaths and alleged "starvation"; and within Israeli society, by waging psychological warfare over the hostages.

Israel's own "Sumud"

So what should Israel do in response? First and foremost, it should practically

advance President Trump's initiative for the voluntary migration of Gaza's population. This is not only a genuine solution to the Strip's fundamental problems and backed by polls indicating high demand among Gazans themselves, it's also the move Hamas fears most. The initiative could also alleviate the humanitarian crisis and serve as a counter to Israel's critics.

Second, Israel should implement a total shutdown of internet and communications in Gaza. Despite much talk, little has been done. These are the very tools that allow Hamas to maintain its grip on the Strip, building its narrative, directing civilians, managing media campaigns, and enforcing control.

Third, humanitarian aid should be limited to designated safe zones only. Aid must not be delivered to areas from which civilians have been instructed to evacuate. These zones should be encircled, allowing for attrition of Hamas fighters who remain behind.

Fourth, Hamas leadership abroad must be physically targeted. For reasons that remain unclear, the group's external leaders continue to operate freely, directing the organization's political strategy without interference. Neutralizing them is essential to significantly hindering Hamas's ability to recover post-war.

No less important, Israel must minimize the risks of IDF troop abductions or casualties in Gaza. Despite international criticism, the IDF must be supported in maintaining the intensity of its operations. Israel must not adopt any measures that would increase risks to its soldiers simply to placate foreign critics.

Hamas views "sumud", Arabic for steadfastness, as the key to victory. But Israel, too, must display resolve. The many gains achieved through the Swords of Iron War, hard-won at great cost, have brought Israel closer to its goals. With strategic cunning, persistence, and confidence in the justness of its cause, Israel can achieve them all.

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