

Israel's enemies are learning what resilience really means

written by Meir Ben Shabbat | 19.09.2026

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian will address the UN General Assembly this week as part of what is known as the session's High-level Week. It will be his third appearance in that forum since taking office, but this time he will speak against the backdrop of an active, ongoing war with the United States and Israel.

Pezeshkian will take the podium with a leadership in Tehran very different from the one in place when he began his term, with Iran's economy at an unprecedented low, President Donald Trump declaring Iran "FINISHED!" and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stating the ultimate objective in unmistakable terms: remove the threat and bring down the regime in Tehran, which is now fighting for its survival.

It is unclear how much influence the figure of the supreme leader who appointed him will continue to exert over Pezeshkian. He certainly will not forget the circumstances in which Ayatollah Ali Khamenei went to his grave.

No surprises should be expected in his speech. He will place full responsibility for the war and its consequences on Washington and Jerusalem, portray Iran as defending itself against aggression, and justify the drone and missile attacks on US bases in the region and on vessels in the Gulf on the grounds of its "right to a legitimate response."

One issue he is expected to address is of particular concern to the leadership in Tehran: its efforts, with the assistance of Russia, to strip the snapback mechanism of its legal validity. The mechanism automatically reinstated all UN sanctions against Iran over its nuclear violations. A critical debate on the issue is expected at the end of the month, ahead of which Pezeshkian is expected to reiterate that Iran does not seek nuclear weapons, "but will insist on its rights."

"Over the past year, the world has witnessed the true nature of the Israeli regime," Pezeshkian said in his speech two years ago. That was before Operation Rising Lion and Operation Roaring Lion.

He meant it as a curse, but it came out a blessing. His intention was to accuse Israel of war crimes and crimes against humanity, but instead he offered an accurate and complimentary assessment: The Israel that emerged after Oct. 7 is revealing its true nature: believing, proactive, daring, sophisticated and determined in the face of all those who rise against it. Without swagger or arrogance, but with a great deal of optimism and gratitude.

The assumption that a Western and divided society like Israel would collapse under three years of missile attacks has proved mistaken, according to a position paper published at the beginning of the month by Mada al-Carmel, the Arab Center for Applied Social Research, based in Haifa. According to the paper, the data show that Israel's Jewish public has demonstrated sustained resilience, broadly supports the continuation of military campaigns and is willing to bear the human and economic costs because of a shared perception of an existential threat, regardless of how satisfied it is with the government.

This is not the first time such a favorable assessment has been made of the resilience of Israel's home front. In January 2025, veteran researcher and political writer Majed Kayali described the collapse of the "spider-web illusion" and the "falsehood and deception of the term 'unity of the arenas'" in an article published by the respected Al Majalla magazine. The headline of his article summed up the argument: "The collapse of the military option against Israel."

Similar observations have been made by Dr. Abdel Moneim Said, chairman of the advisory board of the Egyptian Center for Strategic Studies. In a series of articles and commentaries, he highlighted two conceptual failures that worked against Hamas leaders and Iran's so-called axis of resistance.

The first was a misreading of the effect Israel's internal divisions would have on Israeli society. Instead, Israeli society came together and displayed a resilience that surprised decision-makers in Gaza and Tehran, enabling a powerful, wide-ranging campaign that changed the face of the region.

The second failure identified by Said was the illusion of "unity of the arenas" and the reliance on regional actors. The axis assumed that an eruption in one arena would automatically activate a comprehensive regional front capable of defeating Israel. In practice, the leading Arab states chose to safeguard their own national interests, leaving Iran and its proxies to deal on their own with the blow that

befell them.

It is reasonable to assume that these conclusions about Israel also reflect the current thinking of those who remain at the helm of the axis of resistance, or of other regional actors who, for understandable reasons, do not express such views openly. The importance of such recognition is difficult to overstate.

Victory is not only military

Israel's war is not yet over and is still being waged in the physical realm, but victory will be unmistakable if it produces a change in the enemy's consciousness and not merely in its capabilities: an internal recognition that Israel cannot be defeated by force and that attempting to do so is not worthwhile.

The way the region perceives Israel, not only its defensive and offensive military capabilities but also its economic strength and the resilience of its home front, provides grounds for optimism regarding the challenge of achieving that change in perception.

Some will argue that Israel's policy on the use of force and its approach to diplomatic arrangements are perceived as bullying and as a quest for hegemony, thereby deepening its isolation. In the neighborhood in which we live, we have no other choice.

'Let us proclaim the awesome holiness of this day'

A sense of spiritual vigilance and a deep inner desire for introspection and repair fill us on the eve of Yom Kippur. Even as the heart seeks to rise to the greatness of this day, everyday reality makes its own demands. The fresh memories of the surprise attack on Shemini Atzeret, Oct. 7, 2023, intertwine with the horrors of the 1973 Yom Kippur War and compel us to remain on guard.

That, too, is part of the holiness of the day.

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*The opinions expressed in Misgav publications are the authors' alone.