

Providing aid to Gazans is an integral part of Israel's military campaign

written by Prof. Kobi Michael | 24.05.2025

The Israeli government instructed the IDF to begin Operation "Gideon's Chariots" last Friday with the aim of defeating Hamas and dismantling it as a governmental and military entity in the Gaza Strip. The Israeli forces are in the midst of the first phase of the operation and are preparing to carry out the second phase, which essentially involves a deep ground manoeuvre of five divisions to occupy the Gaza Strip and destroy Hamas.

The Israeli government is suspending the second phase of the operation to allow mediators in Doha, Qatar, to exhaust every opportunity for reaching an agreement for the release of hostages and a ceasefire, in line with the proposal of US envoy Steve Witkoff.

If there is no breakthrough in the negotiations in the next few days, Jerusalem will instruct the IDF to begin the second phase of the operation. The intention is to launch a powerful, focused and brief offensive aimed at occupying all or a large part of Gaza and destroying Hamas. At the same time, the civilian population will be relocated to the southern part of the Strip – specifically, the area between the Morag and Philadelphi Corridors – which has been designated as a humanitarian safe zone.

The humanitarian issue is an integral part of the entire military operation. As part of this comprehensive plan, the IDF will establish four large distribution centres for humanitarian aid in the south of the Strip, which will be operated by an experienced and well-known American company. The IDF will secure the envelope of these centres to prevent harm to civilians and the employees of the US company. At the same time, the IDF is preparing to transport humanitarian supplies in smaller quantities to other areas of the Gaza Strip, where Palestinian civilians – who were unable to leave the combat zones or adjacent areas – will be staying. The guiding principle for the IDF is to facilitate humanitarian supplies to all citizens of Gaza while preventing Hamas from continuing to maintain effective

control over the population by stealing and controlling aid.

It is important to emphasise that during the six weeks of the recent ceasefire, which ended on March 19, tens of thousands of humanitarian supply trucks entered Gaza. The warehouses of aid organisations, and especially Hamas warehouses, were filled to capacity. While the supplies of aid organisations are by now indeed almost depleted, Hamas' warehouses remain full. Hamas is acting with the deliberate intention of worsening the humanitarian distress in Gaza and is careful not to provide humanitarian aid from its own warehouses in order to promote the false narrative of starvation.

Almost automatically, the international media, aid and human rights organisations and the UN adopted that narrative of starvation without any real examination of the facts. Western countries, including the UK, France and Canada, are even threatening sanctions against Israel.

Meanwhile, Hamas' rather real war crimes are being ignored. The terrorist organisation steals aid supplies, tortures and murders Palestinians in order to instil fear in their hearts and prevent them from protesting or leaving Gaza. Hamas terrorists have taken over hospitals, schools, UNRWA facilities, mosques, and even cemeteries and turned them into weapons depots, hiding places, and rocket launchers. The organisation's leaders hide in tunnels built under the main hospitals in Gaza from where they direct the war against the IDF and the violent suppression of their own people. Many of the hospital staff, including hospital directors, are official Hamas operatives, helping the jihadists to exploit these civilian and humanitarian facilities for terrorist purposes.

International organisations, including the United Nations through the UNRWA aid agency, have warned almost from the beginning of the war of severe famine and humanitarian collapse. None of these famine predictions have come true.

Hamas' responsibility for the difficult reality that followed October 7 is self-evident. If it had released the hostages and disarmed, there would have been no war. Hamas leaders Ismail Haniyeh, Khaled Meshaal, and Yahya Sinwar have expressed their willingness to sacrifice even 100,000 more civilians for the sake of victory – the destruction of Israel.

The IDF and the State of Israel are of course not immune to mistakes, and it is reasonable to assume that during this long and brutal war, some Israeli soldiers

may have broken the law. However, the number of these is marginal in relation to the scope of the fighting, Hamas' strategy to maximise civilian casualties and the complexity of the battlefield. Israel's military justice and law enforcement systems make every effort to locate these cases, investigate them, and bring the perpetrators to justice. Commanders have been dismissed for moral failures, and the IDF continues to make every effort to reduce the number of civilian casualties, for example by giving early warnings before an attack. Legal advisors accompany and approve each attack while adhering strictly to international law.

Israel has never acted to starve the civilian population and certainly not to exterminate it. Israel, unlike any Western country that has been involved in military campaigns, has continued to provide humanitarian aid even to active war zones, despite knowing that a substantial part of this aid would be commandeered by Hamas. The proceeds from the sale of these supplies helped Hamas to continue fighting.

Due to mostly external pressure, Israel has postponed the occupation of the Gaza Strip to dismantle Hamas as a governing and military power and secure the release of hostages. This delay emboldened Hamas, which manufactured and exploited international pressure on Israel by disseminating manipulated data about civilian casualties. This elaborate cognitive warfare against Israeli society included the abuse of hostages and their families, the systematic exacerbation of internal divisions, and the undermining of public trust in the army and government. Simultaneously, Hamas committed severe war crimes, including harming its own citizens, deceived mediators and presented Israel with impossible demands for a ceasefire and hostage release.

Operation "Gideon's Chariots" aims to fundamentally alter this reality through the destruction of Hamas, the release of the hostages and the establishment of a new security environment in Gaza. The operation seeks to create conditions for an alternative civilian government and initiate the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip. Despite significant international opposition, Israel intends to decisively implement this operation to achieve these objectives.

Published in The Jewish Chronicle, May 21, 2025.