

GNITN - Special Edition

Israel At War – Day 120

Hamas Reasserting Itself

US Fights Back

We knew that a response would happen after drone strikes killed three American soldiers and now they have done just that. We read more about the retaliation in an [article](#) from *The Times Of Israel*:

The US military launched an air assault on dozens of sites in Iraq and Syria used by Iranian-backed militias and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Friday, in the opening salvo of retaliation for the drone strike that killed three US troops in Jordan last weekend.

Joe Biden said in a statement: “The United States does not seek conflict in the Middle East or anywhere else in the world. But let all those who might seek to do us harm know this: If you harm an American, we will respond.”

Biden and other top US leaders had been warning for days that America would strike back at the militias, and they made it clear it wouldn't be just one hit but a “tiered response” over time.

Not wanting conflict in the Middle East sounds good on paper, but the Iranians consider us the Big Satan so we'll see if they want to poke the bear more. Here are some specifics on the strikes: *The massive barrage of strikes hit more than 85 targets at seven locations, including command and control headquarters, intelligence centers, rockets and missiles, drone and ammunition storage sites and other facilities that were connected to the militias or the IRGC's Quds Force, the Guard's expeditionary unit that handles Tehran's relationship with and arming of regional militias.*

The US strikes appeared to stop short of directly targeting Iran or senior leaders of the IRGC's Quds Force within its borders, as the US tries to prevent the conflict from escalating even further.

For its part the US strikes were meant to avoid killing Iranian leaders:

National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said the targets “were carefully selected to avoid civilian casualties and based on clear, irrefutable evidence that they were connected to attacks on US personnel in the region.” He declined to detail what that evidence was.

Hamas Isn't Done In Gaza City

In a sign that the terrorist group is trying to reassert itself, we read in a *Times Of Israel* [article](#) that they appear to be operating in Gaza City in places where the IDF withdrew and allowed Gazans back in:

Hamas has begun to resurface in areas where Israel withdrew the bulk of its forces a month ago, deploying police officers and making partial salary payments to some of its civil servants in Gaza City in recent days, four residents and a senior official in the terror group said Saturday. Signs of a Hamas resurgence in Gaza's largest city underscore the terror group's resilience despite Israel's deadly air and ground campaign since October 7, when Hamas-led terrorists who stormed the border into southern Israel slaughtered some 1,200 people — mostly civilians — and kidnapped 253. Israel has said it's determined to crush Hamas and prevent it from returning to power in Gaza, an enclave it has ruled since 2007.

Apparently this is Hamas' way of trying to restore order:

The return of police marks an attempt to reinstate order in the devastated city after Israel withdrew a significant number of troops from northern Gaza last month, a Hamas official told AP, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media. The official said the group's leaders had given directions to reestablish order in parts of the north where Israeli forces had withdrawn, including by helping prevent the looting of shops and houses abandoned by residents who had heeded repeated Israeli evacuation orders and headed to the southern half of Gaza.

But to the IDF this is not a good sign, but they intend to reassert themselves again: *Following an assessment in northern Gaza on Thursday, the chief of the IDF's Southern Command, Maj. Gen. Yaron Finkelman, told troops that the army will continue to battle Hamas in the area, despite having focused on other locations recently.*

"Our ability to operate here, in the heart of Gaza City again, after we left to attack in other areas, our ability to return here and operate powerfully against the important targets, while striking many dozens of terrorists in recent days, is an important ability, and we will continue to do it," Finkelman said.

Making The IDF Look Unprepared

To be certain, setting up shop again in the north is yet another way to make Israel look like they didn't plan for this to happen. According to the same article, someone brought this up: *The report quoted a defense source blaming the lack of plans for a civilian body to manage affairs in northern Gaza as a major factor in Hamas being able to move in to refill the power vacuum. "If there were a party able to deliver the goods for the north, Hamas would become irrelevant," the unnamed source said.*

A Channel 13 news report last month said IDF Chief of Staff Herzl Halevi had a similar assessment, warning Israel's leaders that gains made over the months of fighting could be eroded due to the lack of a plan for postwar management.

The remarks appear to show that the IDF is not pleased with the war cabinet:

The alleged comments by Halevi in recent weeks were reflective of consternation among military analysts and others regarding the lack of preparation for a so-called "day after" in Gaza, as Israel winds down the intensive phase of its military campaign against Hamas, which, though weakened, remains in power.

"We are facing the erosion of gains made thus far in the war because no strategy has been put together for the day after," Channel 13 news cited Halevi as saying in private conversations with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and others.

The report notes this about why such planning isn't happening:

Attempts by the government to convene ministers for conversations on managing the Gaza Strip and keeping Hamas out of power as the military pulls back have been hampered by infighting within the security cabinet.

Making sure that Hamas can't build a government again may take some time:

The IDF has assessed that fighting in Gaza will likely last throughout all of 2024, as Israel works to strip Hamas of its military and governing capabilities. It has also vowed to continue fighting until all remaining hostages are released from captivity.

Interfering With Aid

As we see in an [article](#) from *i24news.tv*, Hamas is actively keeping humanitarian aid from getting to Gazans:

Video footage has emerged from Gaza revealing allegations that Hamas, the militant group governing the region, is preventing civilians from receiving crucial humanitarian aid.

The Israeli Defense Force (IDF) Arabic spokesperson, Colonel Avichai Adraee, released images that depict Hamas members using violence against civilians, hindering the distribution of aid and restricting their movement to areas deemed "safer."

The videos, filmed recently in Khan Younes, spotlight armed individuals identified as Hamas terrorists interfering with the distribution of humanitarian aid at Al-Amal hospital. Instances of physical violence and firing into the air to intimidate civilians seeking assistance have been reported. Additionally, there are allegations that Hamas is blocking the passage of people attempting to move to areas considered less volatile.

The IDF spokesperson added this information on the scope of the problem:

Colonel Adraee emphasized that these images present only a fraction of the evidence showcasing what he describes as "corruption and cruelty" prevalent under Hamas rule. To further underscore public discontent, General Rassan Alian, coordinator of government activities in the territories, released a video depicting Gaza residents in a humanitarian corridor in Khan Younes expressing their opposition to Hamas, chanting "The people want to overthrow Hamas."

The IDF is also responding to this hinderance:

In response to the reported hindrance of aid delivery and the safety of civilians, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) has established a humanitarian corridor to facilitate the safe movement of civilians out of combat zones.

General Alian noted a surge in public criticism against Hamas in recent days, as Gaza residents prioritize their well-being and the safety of their children over the military strengthening of Hamas and the associated terrorist acts that jeopardize their future.

Hamas isn't done yet as we mentioned. As we pray for peace in the area, we can now add these specific areas to the list.