GNITN Special Edition
Israel At War Day 552
Doing Math In Public

It's Going To Take Time

Apparently there are still quite a lot of tunnels in Gaza still intact as we're told in an article from *The Jerusalem Post*:

The IDF has only destroyed about a quarter of Hamas's tunnels in Gaza, security sources said on Wednesday. Security sources also added that a significant number of smuggling tunnels crossing from Egypt to the Gaza strip are still intact.

The tunnels between Egypt and Gaza are troubling:

The Egypt-Gaza border remains a point of contention, with concerns over weapons smuggling resulting in Israel's refusal to withdraw from the Philadelphia Corridor.

"I saw with my own eyes quite a few tunnels crossing into Egypt; some were closed, and several were open," Defense Minister Israel Katz said at a February conference, according to N12. "We had information that Hamas was planning to attack soldiers and settlements during the ceasefire."

Despite efforts to control the corridor as a buffer zone, numerous experts argue that holding the border may not effectively stop the flow of weapons.

This information comes as the Israel Defense force (IDF) is talking large amounts of territory back from Hamas who had months to occupy it again during that last ceasefire:

The report follows the recent resumption of combat operations in the Gaza Strip and a military order issued in late March directing residents of Rafah in southern Gaza to evacuate. The IDF had previously withdrawn troops from Rafah after a ceasefire was agreed upon in January, though that ceasefire has since expired.

Less than two weeks ago, the IDF reported that Yahalom Unit troops dismantled a one-kilometer-long Hamas tunnel route. Currently, the 143rd, 252nd, and 36th IDF divisions are operating in the area.

The IDF is seeing these tunnels used by Hamas fighters to hide from the inevitable direct fight:

The IDF also told N12 that it has detected a significant number of Hamas terrorists fleeing combat zones. These terrorists are reportedly hiding among civilian populations and within tunnels, likely trying to avoid direct contact with soldiers.

The military noted that its operations in Gaza have become more decentralized, with limited face-to-face combat, although it assumes this will be temporary. The IDF believes Hamas will eventually be forced to engage in direct confrontation again.

Still, the IDF is making quick work of what is left of Hamas:

"IDF troops, under the leadership of the Southern Command, are deepening the operation, and this will continue at a deliberate and determined pace," said Chief of the General Staff, Lt.-Gen Eyal Zamir.

Zamir did note the only thing that can stop their military strategy:

"The only thing that can halt our advance is the release of our hostages. Their return would allow our forces to reposition and enable the continuation of negotiation."

Why Is It Taking So Long?

Many people ask me about the war in Israel because they know that I've studied all about it over the last 500+ days and one of the questions is why is it taking so long to end. I usually tell them that this war is far from conventional because of the aforementioned tunnels. You simply can't bomb the land and destroy all the above ground combat areas. But there is another reason that we find in a video by Amir Tsarfati who is interviewed by Pastor Barry Stagner:

The only reason Hamas is still there is because they have hostages. I mean, everybody knows that. They know that.

So negotiating for the hostages was the major issue from the start and the real reason the fighting is still going on:

The problem, Pastor Barry, is this—and people don't understand it. Everybody says, "Why don't you finish with Hamas? Why don't you destroy Hamas?" We could have destroyed them on October 8. We could have destroyed them on October 10. All we needed was to go and bomb Gaza and destroy everything and they'd be gone. But when you had then 251 hostages held—and now you have 59 still left—you understand that you have a responsibility to bring them back somehow.

Tsarfati then says what I've been saying from the start and that Hamas will never release all the hostages:

Now everyone knows, Pastor Barry, that Hamas will never, ever, ever release all of them. Hamas's right to even exist lies within the fact that they're holding something dear to us. And they understand that they will never be finished if they still hold someone from our own ranks. And therefore, Prime Minister Netanyahu is very tough with them about how many living hostages we can get in the next deal for another temporary ceasefire. He also says—even that ceasefire, even that return of hostages—will not mean that we are finished with the war.

It's a game of numbers now and Tsarfati believes that Netanyahu knows he can only get so many more hostages before the rest have to be rescued:

And so, it's funny because Hamas originally said, "We'll give you one—Idan Alexander. One. And also four slain hostages." Then Israel resumed the war and began to attack. And guess what? Out of the blue, they said, "We'll free five hostages." Netanyahu says, "No, that's not enough. Because everybody knows if we only get five, the rest of them we will never get."

So now, as of yesterday, a new deal that the Egyptians offered—and that's eight hostages for a new truce. And as you can clearly see, Pastor Barry, the more we attack, the more pressure we put, we get them to agree to a higher number.

He says that Netanyahu has a number in mind for the living hostages and the deceased ones and then the negotiating is over:

And the number Netanyahu says is none less than 11 living hostages and half of the dead ones. Pastor Barry, everyone knows in Israel that once we retrieve 11 alive and half of the dead ones, we will never, ever see the rest of them unless we rescue them in a military operation. Because that will be the ones that Hamas will keep as an insurance policy to survive. That's it. They'll never give up on them. And so, the more we release now, the less lives will be at risk when we move on for a risky hostage rescue operation—when we finish Hamas once and for all.

It sounds harsh, but Hamas doesn't think like the rest of the world.