

Israelis Demand Victory

By Gregg Roman • Oct 22, 2023

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As I sit down to pen this newsletter on an El Al flight back to the United States, I find myself reflecting on a whirlwind 36-hour trip from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. I witnessed a nation at war, its people united by a single word echoing through the streets and resonating in the hearts of its citizens: *Victory*.

During my short but intense visit, I had the privilege of meeting with generals, ministers, diplomats, journalists, and soldiers. In every conversation, in every encounter, one word was repeated like a mantra: *Victory*.

The events of October 7th, 2023 are etched into the collective memory of Israel. It was a day of unimaginable tragedy, a day that galvanized the Israeli people like never before.

Now, more than ever, it is clear that the time for "Israel Victory" has arrived.

 Israel's Critical Hour



In the midst of Israel's most critical hour, where the nation's security hangs in the balance, our newsletter will focus on the top priorities of the ongoing conflict.

Why it matters: Israel's extensive preparations for a significant ground campaign in Gaza, potentially its most massive operation in decades, take center stage.

The big picture: Meanwhile, as Israel battles Hamas in the south, an equally vital theater unfolds in the north, with Iran's involvement casting a shadow over regional stability.

Yes, but: The IDF faces daunting obstacles as it prepares to enter Gaza, navigating the complex urban environment and the use of human shields by Hamas. Moreover, the international community closely watches Israel's actions, putting pressure on the IDF to minimize civilian casualties and maintain its moral high ground.

Overwhelming Support to Eliminate Hamas



A poll commissioned by the Israel Victory Project shows that there is overwhelming support among all sectors of the Israeli public for the primary objective of Operation Swords of Iron to be the elimination of Hamas.

Why it matters: The information is important because it demonstrates the strong public sentiment in favor of eliminating Hamas.

By the numbers: When asked, “What should Israel’s primary goal of the operation be?” 70% of the public wants to eliminate Hamas, 15% want to secure the release of captives, and 13% want to disarm Hamas.

Arab public sentiment: Interestingly, 54% of those who said they voted for an Arab party in the last election also replied “eliminate Hamas” as their preferred objective of the operation.

Israel's Massive Ground Campaign



Israel is preparing for a massive ground operation in Gaza, potentially its largest in four decades. Israeli defense correspondent, Alon Ben David, [reported](#) that the IDF has finished its preparations for an invasion. The decision to invade now lies with Israel's war cabinet.

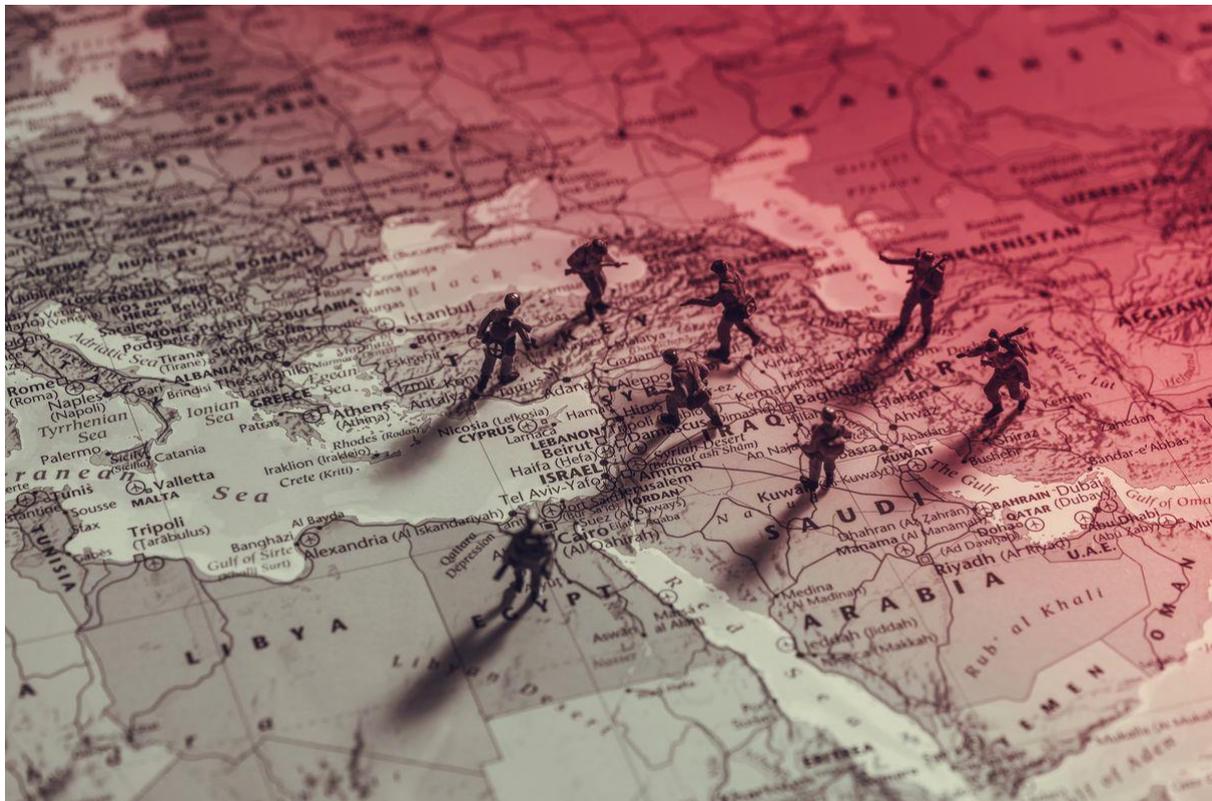
Why it matters: The operation aims to topple Hamas, remove the terror threat, solve the hostage issue, and defend Israel's borders and civilians.

The big picture: The invasion threatens Hamas's survival and aims to end its rule over the Gaza Strip.

Yes, but: Knocking down enemy groups doesn't mean they're defeated.

What's next: Israel will have to answer the question of who will run the Strip after dismantling Hamas.

Amid Israel's War with Hamas, the North Simmers



Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian threatened Hezbollah's intervention in the war against Israel, but no preemptive measures have been taken yet.

Why it matters: The Iran/Lebanon file remains the key component of current developments on the geopolitical level.

The big picture: Iran now has control over a contiguous area of territory from Syria to Iraq, and a second front in Lebanon would have significant implications beyond the region.

What's next: The United States has deployed two aircraft carrier groups to deter Middle East threats against Israel, potentially changing the equation for Iran and Hezbollah.

Yes, but: Hezbollah is walking a fine line between all-out intervention and standing on the sidelines, engaging in aggression but not triggering a major Israeli response.

✪ The Proportionality Obsession



There is no accepted definition of 'proportionality' in regard to Israel's response to Hamas.

Why it matters: The principle of proportionality involves balancing military advantage and harm to civilians.

The big picture: Proportionality is difficult to assess without access to all necessary information.

Yes, but: Critics argue that Israel's response is illegitimate if casualties are not proportional.

What the IDF is saying: “Israel seems to be the only country never allowed to win a war.”

What must come next: Israel must seek victory and ensure Hamas is defeated.

Obstacles Ahead: IDF in Gaza



Israeli forces face daunting challenges as they prepare to enter Gaza.

Why it matters: The IDF must overcome Hamas's extensive tunnel system and innovative use of weaponry.

Defenders can hold an attacking force for extended periods in an urban environment, extracting a high price for every building.

Hamas is likely to use human shields to erode international legitimacy and pressure Israel for a ceasefire.

The bottom line: The IDF must navigate diplomatic pressures while aiming to repeat past success in a different environment.

Decent Outcome Possible in Gaza



A decent Gaza-led administration could emerge, making autonomy possible, [writes](#) MEF president Daniel Pipes in the *Wall Street Journal*.

Why it matters: Despite deep anti-Zionism, Gazans have endured exploitation by their rulers as cannon fodder for PR.

The big picture: Over the past 15 years, Gazans have faced a monstrous and possibly unique experience under Hamas rule.

This experience has shaped their resilience and desire for a more competent and accountable leadership.

Political Islam's Rise in the Middle East



No sane American president takes office hoping for war. Joe Biden came to office in 2021 promising to end the 'forever wars' of Iraq and Afghanistan. But as he boarded Air Force One on Tuesday, another irony of fate was in evidence: the American-enforced world order is crumbling, and the results are now becoming clear.

Why it matters: The rise of political Islam in the Middle East has significant implications for regional stability and the balance of power.

The big picture: Iran, empowered by America's Middle East withdrawal, has spent years surrounding Israel with client Islamist paramilitary groups, aiming for Israel's eventual collapse and its own regional domination.

What's next: The recent events serve as a warning about the new multipolar world and the seriousness of the Iranian and Islamist project in the Middle East and beyond.

The Problem of America's 'Frenemies' and Hamas



The recent acts of terrorism from Gaza call for reevaluating alliances and diplomacy.

Why it matters: It is important to address the support of Hamas by U.S. allies Turkey and Qatar.

The big picture: Turkey and Qatar openly support Hamas and provide shelter, funding, and propaganda for the organization.

What's next: The U.S. should apply pressure on Turkey and Qatar to change their support for Hamas.

US Institutions Support Hamas: The Disturbing Truth



There are institutions in the United States that have shown support for Hamas, including the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and American Muslims for Palestine (AMP).

Why it matters: The support for Hamas from these organizations is significant because it undermines peace efforts and promotes violence.

The big picture: The Muslim Brotherhood, with its long-term plan to establish an Islamic movement in North America, has influenced these organizations and their support for Hamas.

Yes, but: Despite their denials, the connections between these US organizations and Hamas are evident, as seen in their statements and actions.

What's next: It is crucial for Americans to be aware of these connections and reconsider their support for organizations affiliated with Hamas.

The Hamas Attack and the Iranian Project



The Hamas attack from Gaza on October 7 reflects the return of two linked phenomena: the Iranian project for the destruction of Israel and the popularity of Islamist politics in the region.

Why it matters: The attack highlights the ongoing threat posed by Islamist militarized political movements and the Iranian alliance with Hamas.

The big picture: Iran maintains an alliance with Hamas to project power in the region and strike at Israel's civilian society. The Iranian

project depends on the popularity of Islamism among Arab Muslim populations.

What's next: The outcome of the larger fight brewing in the wake of the October 7 attack will determine the future of the Middle East.

Preventing Future Iranian Sponsored Attacks



Israel must ensure that another Iranian sponsored invasion like Oct. 7 never happens again. The U.S. can help.

Why it matters: Re-establishing deterrence is crucial to protect Israel.

What's next: Specific measures the U.S. can take include intensifying punitive measures against Iran, diplomatically isolating Iran, engaging in cyber operations, and enhancing military presence in the region.

The bottom line: Strengthening defense capabilities and expanding sanctions are necessary to counter and defend against Iranian aggression.

Behind Israel's Momentous Failure



Israel is reeling from a devastating surprise attack launched by a much inferior military force, hitting the civilian population near the Gaza Strip.

Why it matters: The attack is important because it exposes Israel's over reliance on technology and its divided political leadership. Furthermore, this attack highlights the vulnerability of Israel's intelligence and surveillance systems, prompting the need for defense reform and strategic reassessment.

The big picture: The attack came at a time when Israel was distracted by protecting Israeli interests in the West Bank and facing internal divisions over constitutional changes.

What's next: Beyond Gaza, the focus now is on the potential involvement of Hezbollah and the possibility of a larger conflict. Only after the cannons fall silent, will Israel have time to make deep systemic changes to its defense doctrine.

Islamists and Israel: Killing Women and Children



In a recent [debate](#) between Piers Morgan and Mohamad Hijab, the latter condemned the killing of civilians by Hamas and any other entity. However, there are historical and religious caveats in Islam that justify attacks on non-Muslims, even if non-combatants are killed. The prophet Muhammad himself authorized attacks on women and children during war. Islamist teachings and the actions of jihadist leaders have normalized indiscriminate violence and terrorism. The IDF, on the other hand, primarily acts in self-defense. It is important to recognize these differences.

Why it matters: Understanding the historical and religious context of Hamas' stance on killing women and children is crucial to comprehending the ongoing conflict in Gaza and the actions of various parties involved.

The big picture: Hamas' interpretation of Islam's prophet, Muhammad, allows the killing of civilians during offensive jihads, while the IDF acts in self-defense. This distinction highlights the different motivations and justifications behind the actions of these parties.

What's next: It is important to continue examining and discussing the complex dynamics of Islamism and Hamas' ideology, including the role of religion and historical context to foster a better understanding of the terror organization and its modus operandi. Both the organization and its ideology must be defeated.

Susannah Johnston on Taxpayer Funding of Pro-Hamas Islamists



WEBINAR

Locally and Nationally, Your Taxes Are Funding Islamism

SUSANNAH JOHNSTON



Millions of federal taxpayers' dollars are flowing to organizations controlled by Islamists or their networks, including those supportive of the Muslim Brotherhood or Hamas.

Why it matters: Government support for Islamist groups legitimizes them and helps them impose control over Muslim communities.

Investigations have uncovered tens of millions of dollars going to radical groups in Massachusetts, Illinois, New York, and California.

The bottom line: Taxpayer funding is insufficiently vetted, and public officials need to be more aware of the extremism and subterfuge of these organizations.

Aryeh Lightstone on the Wider Implications of the Fighting in Gaza

A promotional graphic for a webinar. On the left, there is a logo for the Middle East Forum, consisting of two blue triangles forming a larger triangle, with the text "Middle East Forum" below it. Below the logo, the word "WEBINAR" is written in large, bold, blue capital letters. Underneath that, a red rectangular box contains the text "Wider Implications of the Fighting in Gaza" in white. Below the red box, the name "ARYEH LIGHTSTONE" is written in bold, red capital letters. At the bottom left, there is a red rounded rectangular button with a white play icon and the text "WATCH NOW" in white. On the right side of the graphic is a portrait of Aryeh Lightstone, a man with short dark hair, wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, and a dark red tie. He has a small American flag pin on his lapel. The background of the graphic is a light gray world map.

The Biden administration's alteration of course in the Middle East created a power vacuum, leading to confusion and chaos.

Why it matters: The lack of a coherent foreign policy from the U.S. and the Biden administration's focus on the Palestinian Arabs endangered the success of the Abraham Accords.

Israel's previous government's maritime agreement with Lebanon weakened Israel and damaged its regional reputation for projecting strength.

The stage was set for Hamas to carry out barbaric acts against Jews, leading to a united mission in Israel to eradicate the terror entity in Gaza.

The bottom line: This conflict is not just between Israel and its neighbors, but a war of civilization between good and evil.

MEF's Campaign to #DefeatHamas



The Palestinian cause died on October 7, 2023, assassinated by fanatic elements mired in an Islamist ideology of the worst kind.

Why it matters: The Middle East Forum stands at the forefront to push for an end to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

By the numbers: We have 1,700 Israeli activists mobilized across the country's demographics strata to whip support for Israel Victory. Thousands more Americans and Europeans have participated in our campaign outside of Israel.

The big picture: The transformation of Israel Victory from radical idea to mainstream consensus opens unprecedented opportunities for the Middle East Forum.

Join us by clicking [here](#). You can also support us by clicking [here](#).

I was not planning on ending the newsletter like this, but it is with deep sadness that we announce the unexpected passing of Burak Bekdil, a distinguished Turkish journalist and the Middle East Forum's Charles Wax Writing Fellow. Burak's untimely death, resulting from a tragic traffic accident as indicated by several informed journalists, has left a void in our organization.

His final reporting, a powerful two-part series published on October 10 and 13, exposed the mendacity and cynicism behind Erdoğan's calls for restraint during a critical time in the Middle East. Burak's commitment to unvarnished reporting and his willingness to speak truth to power set an exemplary standard, especially in a country where journalists often face persecution and imprisonment.

Burak Bekdil's contributions to journalism and his remarkable bravery will be deeply missed, not only by the Middle East Forum but by the entire journalism community. Our thoughts are with his family, friends, and colleagues during this difficult time.

Gregg Roman
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[Middle East Forum](#)

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