

29 novembre (Haaretz)

[Bring in NATO Forces: The Plan Israel Should Present for Postwar Gaza - Opinion - Haaretz.com](#)

Opinion |

## Bring in NATO Forces: The Plan Israel Should Present for Postwar Gaza

Israel cannot and should not stay in Gaza. But when Israel's allies ask: What's next? Netanyahu and his government of bloodthirsty messianic thugs have no answer. My plan is based on a NATO intervention force, and restarting two-state negotiations



Israeli soldiers take position in a damaged building in the Zeitoun district of Gaza City this weekCredit: MAHMUD HAMS - AFP

[Ehud Olmert](#)

**Ehud Olmert is a former prime minister of Israel**

Nov 29, 2023 1:46 pm IST

The war in Gaza is unavoidable. Its timing is a result of the insane Hamas murder spree in southern Israel. No country in the world would tolerate the murder of over 1,200 of its citizens, most of them while they were trying to hide in their homes.

Hamas is not waging a war against Israel. For years, Hamas been waging a concerted murder campaign against its citizens. [The firing of missiles](#) on Israeli communities has become a [part of the daily routine](#) of hundreds of thousands of Israelis.

The [murderous assault by Hamas on October 7](#) was a declaration of an intention to eliminate thousands of civilians, [of all ages and genders](#), from months-old infants to their 80-year-old grandparents, and to destroy the communities where they were living. There's no point in describing the horrors once again. The pictures have already been publicized, and they [shocked a considerable part of the population](#) in the enlightened world.

Since Hamas is a terror organization without inhibitions, situated in the heart of Gaza City where living conditions are very overcrowded, there's no way to avoid conducting the military campaign in the place of residence of many Palestinian civilians, who are themselves [victims of that same organization](#). That's why Israel forced the residents in Gaza to evacuate from the city center. Not out of cruelty and inhumanity, but in order to distance them from the place where they serve [as a human shield](#) for the murderous organization.

If the military campaign is renewed [following the cease-fire](#) and the prisoner exchange, it will continue until Hamas' military capability is eliminated. It's hard to estimate how long that will take, but decency demands that we stress that it will take longer than the population of the Western countries, and Western leaders like U.S. President Joe Biden, a true friend of Israel, [are willing to tolerate](#).

Just for that reason, Israel must already now present the final scenario, [for after the military operation](#). The question that the Israeli government is being asked by the leaders of the U.S., the U.K., France and Germany is: [What next?](#)

The Israeli government has no answer. But even if Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his partners are unwilling or unable to outline the necessary steps – the State of Israel, and those concerned about its stability and security – cannot evade giving such an answer.

And in my opinion, these are the proper steps to adopt at the conclusion of the military campaign: [Israel has no intention](#), desire, or ability to remain in Gaza, and at the end of the campaign it must withdraw to the border. Meanwhile, together with the military steps, it must reach an agreement with the United States and its other friends about the entry of an [international intervention force](#) to Gaza, based on soldiers from NATO countries, which would replace the Israeli army.

There's no chance that an army connected [to the Palestinian Authority](#) will enter Gaza with the assistance of the Israeli army or in its stead. Neither Palestinian forces nor the forces of any Arab country will agree to enter Gaza after the departure of the Israeli army.

Egypt, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia – all fervently desire the destruction of Hamas, which constitutes a threat to their domestic stability, but none of them wants to be identified with Israel's military activity.

Therefore, if the United States and Israel's other allies don't support Israel's remaining in Gaza, there's no choice but to send a military intervention force of NATO countries, sponsored by the United Nations Security Council.

This would rehabilitate the civil administration and the government mechanisms in the Gaza Strip for a period of about a year and a half, as we did at the end of the [Second Lebanon War in 2006](#) under the sponsorship of Security Council Resolution 1701, which in effect distanced Hezbollah from the border with Israel and laid the foundation for the quiet that prevailed on this front for 17 years.



Palestinians look for survivors following Israeli airstrike in Nusseirat refugee camp, Gaza Strip, last month. Credit: Doaa AlBaz / AP

After about a year, during which the international community would prepare the infrastructure for a new government system in Gaza and begin rehabilitation of the areas of the city that were destroyed, the international intervention force would be replaced by the security mechanisms of the Palestinian Authority.

At the same time, Israel must already offer a diplomatic horizon to end the military process. We must declare that immediately upon the conclusion of the military campaign, Israel will begin to conduct talks with the PA about a solution based on [two states for two peoples](#).

This is the only diplomatic horizon that could offer an opportunity for stability and cooperation between Israel and the Palestinians, and diplomatic-military-economic cooperation between it and the moderate Arab countries, headed by Egypt, Jordan, the UAE and Bahrain, with whom Israel has diplomatic relations, [and later on with Saudi Arabia](#) as well.

There's no question that [the Netanyahu government](#) is unwilling and unable to take such a daring step.

Netanyahu [will end his premiership in disgrace](#), as anticipated by hundreds of thousands of Israelis who spent most of the past year in the city squares in demonstrations against him. His government and its [extremist, messianic political partners](#), who believe that Israel's future involves the annexation of the West Bank, expulsion of its inhabitants and establishment of a government that doesn't recognize the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and equal rights.



A memorial at the site of the Nova festival in Re'im, southern Israel with portraits of festivalgoers who were murdered or kidnapped during the October 7 attack by Hamas gunmen from GazaCredit: Ohad Zwigenberg /AP

[The gang of thugs](#) that dominates the government, headed by National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, [Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich](#) and partners from Likud, wants an all-out war. For them, the war in Gaza is only a preface to a total war that must erupt in the West Bank and the north. The greater the chaos, the more complicated the military campaign, the greater the chances, they believe, of expelling a substantial part of the Palestinian population in the West Bank and annexing the territories.

The war in Gaza is not the war of Ben-Gvir, Smotrich and their friends. It's our war, the war of the development towns, the moshavim and the kibbutzim (to whom the prime minister has yet to refer directly), who want to live in peace and security in their communities, but don't want a perpetual messianic war with the Palestinian people. We will want and be able to live in peace and security alongside the state that they will establish.

There's no choice but to oust Netanyahu's bloodthirsty government. The first step must begin immediately at the conclusion of the military campaign in Gaza. Maybe even earlier.

***Ehud Olmert is a former prime minister of Israel***