

# Israel will not return to pre-October 7

## PERSPECTIVE

"It is quite possible that the war in Gaza will be the first war in Israel's history that the army has fought and lost. That loss would be catastrophic for Israel and deeply damaging to the United States," wrote Jon Alterman, director of the Middle East program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Over the course of more than 70 years, the Israeli army tried to portray an invincible image of itself, disregarding the rights of

the Palestinian people and ignoring UN resolutions. Some ground realities have contributed to this image, including its victories in the three wars with Arab countries and its harsh, inhumane treatment of Palestinians. According to Mohammad Javad Zarif, former Iranian foreign minister, alongside the notion of invincibility, Israelis have also presented themselves as victims over the past seven decades. This image of victimhood is based on the claim that Jews were massacred in World War II as part of the

Holocaust. Until October 7, everything seemed to be in favor of the regime. The Palestinian issue had gradually been sidelined, and Israel had moved from normalizing relations with a few Arab countries to the main stage of normalization, that is establishing political relations with Saudi Arabia. The well-equipped Israeli army with its cutting-edge intelligence and communication equipment had seemingly provided a sense of security to the leaders of this regime. They be-

lieved there was no threat to the regime and no obstacle to pursuing its aggressive goals. However, on the morning of October 7, the myth of Israel's invincibility shattered. The Operation Al-Aqsa Storm by Hamas dealt a severe blow to Israel's credibility and position. On October 15, the Hebrew-language newspaper Haaretz wrote that the strategic blow inflicted on Israel by the Qassam Brigades on October 7 was a thousand times more dangerous than the defeat in the 1973 war. The Al-Aqsa Storm had a signif-

icant and important difference from previous confrontations between Palestinian resistance groups and Israelis. Unlike previous cases, this operation took place inside the occupied territories. This means that Hamas, as a lone resistance group, overcame the deterrent power of Israel and penetrated into the occupied territories. Tzachi Hanegbi, the head of Israel's National Security Council, admitted a week after the operation that Israel received a painful blow. "I made a mistake when

I said Hamas was deterred after Operation Guardian of the Walls," he added. Some consider the high volume of destructive attacks by Israel on Gaza as an attempt to compensate for the heavy defeat on October 7. Seyyed Reza Sadrolhosseini, an expert on West Asian affairs, emphasized in an interview with Iran Daily that Israel, in order to compensate for its historical defeat on October 7 and restore its shattered dominance and lost credibility among the Israelis, resorted to massacring the

## At Gaza hospital, patients trapped in 'circle of death'

### UN warns fuel shortage to halt aid work in '48 hours'



Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist



## International Desk

Israeli forces reached the gates of Gaza City's main hospital on Monday, the primary target in their battle to seize control of the northern half of the Gaza Strip, as the UN warned its operations in the war-torn strip would shut down within two days due to fuel shortages. The Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said Monday the death toll at Shifa hospital rose to 34 since the weekend, as the facility suffered fuel shortages.

The latest toll included 27 adult intensive care patients and seven babies, deputy health minister in the besieged strip, Youssef Abu Rish, told AFP.

The UN agency for Palestinian refugees warned Monday its operations in war-torn Gaza would shut down within two days due to fuel shortages. "The humanitarian operation in Gaza will grind to a halt in the next 48 hours as no fuel is allowed to enter Gaza," UNRWA's Gaza chief Thomas White wrote on X, formerly Twitter.

Battles around hospitals have forced thousands of Palestinians to flee from some of the last shelters in northern Gaza while stranding critically wounded patients, including newborns, and their caregivers with dwindling supplies and no electricity, health officials said Monday.

At least 650 patients were still inside, desperate to be evacuated to another medical facility by the Red Cross or some other neutral agency. Israel claims the hospital sits atop tunnels housing a headquarters for Hamas fighters, who are to blame for its plight for using patients as shields, which both Hamas and the hospital staff at Shifa deny.

World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said Shifa "is not functioning as a hospital anymore."

Another hospital in Gaza City, Quds hospital, was forced to shut down Sunday because it ran out of fuel. The

Palestinian Red Crescent Society, which operates the facility, said Israeli forces are stationed nearby and that preparations are being made to evacuate some 6,000 patients, medics and displaced people.

It said that an attempt to reach the hospital from Khan Younis in order to evacuate patients has been abandoned due to "continuing shelling and shooting". A convoy accompanied by the International Committee of the Red Cross was forced to return due to the dangerous conditions.

Both sides have seized on the plight of hospitals, particularly Shifa's, as a symbol of the larger war, now in its sixth week.

The fighting was triggered by Hamas's unprecedented Oct. 7 surprise attack into Israel, and Israel's response has brought unseen levels of death and destruction to Gaza.

"The tanks are in front of the hospital. We are under full blockade. It's a totally civilian area. Only hospital facility, hospital patients, doctors and other civilians staying in the hospital. Someone should stop this," a surgeon at the hospital, Dr. Ahmed El Mokhalalati, said by telephone.

"They bombed the (water) tanks, they bombed the water wells, they bombed the oxygen pump as well. They bombed everything in the hospital. So, we are hardly surviving. We tell everyone, the hospital is no more a safe place for treating patients. We are harming patients by keeping them here."

## War at risk of spreading

There was also fresh concern that the war could spread beyond Gaza, with an upsurge of clashes on the border with Lebanon, and the United States launching air strikes on military targets in neighboring Syria.

Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant on Saturday warned the Hezbollah resistance movement that launching a war would result in widespread destruction in Lebanon similar to that in Gaza.

"If it (Hezbollah) makes this kind of mistake here, the ones who will pay the price will be first and foremost Lebanese citizens," Gallant told soldiers on the northern border in remarks relayed by his office. "What we're doing in Gaza, we can also do in Beirut."

## UNRWA building targeted

The IDF issued an update on its military operation in Gaza, saying its forces have conducted 4,300 strikes to date. It claims to have struck "approximately 300 tunnel shafts".

The UN's refugee mission in Palestine has reported that one of its buildings in Rafah has been struck by Israel's Navy. Rafah is in the south of the Gaza Strip, within the area that Israel has insisted that Palestinians move to. In a statement, UNRWA said there were no casualties. It added that UN buildings and facilities within Gaza currently host nearly 780,000 displaced people, saying "they should be protected at all times".