

'Watching Gazans walk back to Northern Gaza tells story of a triumphant population'

By Zohreh Qanadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

After 15 months of brutal conflict in Gaza, a cease-fire agreement between Israeli and Palestinian side took effect on January 19, providing over 2 million Palestinians in the enclave with some relief.

The first six-week phase of the agreement will involve the release of some Israeli captives held in Gaza in exchange for Palestinians held by Israel, a gradual withdrawal of Israeli forces to Gaza's borders, and a significant increase in access to humanitarian aid. The cease-fire has held for first two weeks, allowing for hundreds of aid trucks to flow into the tiny coastal territory and for hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to return to shattered homes in Northern Gaza.

Additionally, on Feb. 1, Rafah border was opened to allow fifty wounded Palestinian children to leave Gaza for treatment in Egypt. Rafah crossing is the sole exit point for Gazans and it had been closed for nine long months.

Wholesale destruction of Gaza by Israel started after the October 7, 2023 attack of the Palestinian youth which resulted in the deaths of approximately 1,200 Israelis and the capturing of 251 others.

Many thousands of Palestinians, mostly women and children, have been killed in cold blood by Israel in what has been called a "genocide" by virtually all human rights organizations including Amnesty



International and Human Rights Watch. Currently, the figure 46,700 dead Palestinians, provided by the Palestinian health ministry, is at best an under estimation. An article published by the highly regarded European journal of public health, the Lancet, suggests that over 168,000 people may have been killed by Israel during the first nine months of the genocide. Most of the 2.3 million population has been displaced, and there is

widespread destruction. Severe shortages of food, water, fuel, medicine and shelter has been widely reported. Multiple cases of death caused by starvation, and hypothermia that can kill a person in under one hour, are at hand.

Despite the massive toll that the brutal Israeli military onslaught has taken on Gazans, the truce deal has been hailed as a victory by Palestinians and their supporters. Many analysts, activists,

and even some Israeli officials have admitted that Israelis have lost the war in Gaza.

The former head of the Israeli National Security Council described the war as a disastrous failure for Israel in Gaza, stating on the day the truce deal was made, that Hamas has won the Gaza war and thwarted Israel's objectives.

"This war was a disastrous Israeli failure in Gaza," Giora Eiland, a retired general, told Maariv

newspaper.

"This war was a failure for a very simple reason that Hamas did not only succeed in preventing Israel from achieving its goals, but also remained in power," he added.

A world-renowned international relations theorist John J. Mearsheimer, who had described the Gaza war as a potential genocide, said in an interview with Al Jazeera that the Israelis lost the war in Gaza. They failed to drive Palestinians out



Displaced Palestinians return to Rafah as a cease-fire deal between Israel and Hamas went into effect in Rafah, Gaza Strip, on Jan. 19, 2025.
● MARIAM DAGGA/AP

of Gaza. He said the deal is the admission of defeat by Israelis.

Those in favor of the deal underline that it came amid the regime's desperation in the face of interminable and successful anti-Israeli operations by the region's resistance movements.



Mozghan Savabieasfahani



This is a humiliating defeat for Israel. Israel with the full backing of the United States and Europe, which have lavishly supported the genocide of the Palestinian people for one year and four months has lost the fight to a brutalized but unwavering population.

Dr. Mozghan Savabieasfahani, a justice advocate for Palestine and an award-winning environmental scientist, spoke with Iran Daily regarding this matter:

Watching Palestinians walk back to Northern Gaza, in their hundreds of thousands, using the roads that were forbidden to Palestinians, tells the story of a triumphant population. A population that suffered a massive genocide, on an industrial scale, is on the march back home to Northern Gaza.

This is a humiliating defeat for Israel. Israel with the full backing of the monstrous and criminal governments of the United States and Europe, which have lavishly supported the genocide of the Palestinian people for one year and four months has lost the fight to a brutalized but unwavering population. The massive physical presence of Palestinian Resistance, at the time of prisoner exchange, in areas that Israel had claimed to have been "cleaned" of the existence of Resistance forces, is another testament to victory of Palestinians.

Hamas still controls Gaza

Moreover, Palestinian civil adminis-



tration has resumed work. If there is any authority in Gaza, it still appears to be Hamas.

The massive Israeli bombardment particularly in North Gaza had left many thinking that Resistance had

been decimated. However, we now see that this is not the case. Some displaced Palestinians suggest that

the Resistance may potentially be stronger than before.

One of the main stated goals of Israel was the destruction of a network of tunnels used by the Resistance. However, according to Israeli media, the infrastructure used by the Resistance including the tunnel network is still largely operational, though estimates about how much of it is still intact vary significantly.

The European Council on Foreign Relations was told by members of the Resistance that many of the tunnels have been restored or preserved and, in some cases, even expanded.

The picture that rises is one of massive political and military defeat for the largest nuclear army in Western Asia, that is the apartheid, Israel. A free Palestine is in the horizon and resistance will no doubt continue until complete and total victory.



Displaced Palestinians return to their homes in the northern Gaza Strip on Jan. 27, 2025.
● MOHAMMAD ABU SAMRA/AP