

November 15, 2023

Flash Executive Summary Report



- After the horrific attacks beginning October 7th, Israel remains committed to eliminating the Hamas terrorists and their authority to govern in the Gaza Strip. As Israel steadily occupies the north portion of the Gaza Strip after surrounding Gaza City, with intense urban combat between the terrorist fighters and the Israeli Defense Force (IDF), deaths will continue to steadily mount on both sides, especially Palestinian civilians.
- The 240 hostages, and more broadly, large numbers of Palestinian civilians continue to be used as human shields to attempt to protect Hamas terrorists from Israeli attacks:
 - Several provisions in the Geneva Conventions prohibit the use of human shields; doing so constitutes a war crime. Not only do the Hamas terrorists have the obligation to not use human shields, but they are also obligated to protect their population as much as possible from the effects of war; Hamas fails on both counts. Simultaneously, employing human shields does not exempt Israel from their responsibility to avoid causing excessive harm to civilians. Exactly defining “excessive” collateral damage can be challenging, and this will be interpreted in many ways.
 - The West and most nations support Israel’s right to self-defense, though this may moderate with calls for a cease fire and increased humanitarian assistance to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Emotions will continue to heighten domestically and internationally in ways that could change policies of support to Israel.
- In the short-term, the Gaza Strip will see growing intensity, casualties, and collateral damage, as is the nature of high-intensity urban warfare. The IDF will likely remain in the Gaza Strip until follow-on governance and security plans are finalized. The short-term and long-term ramifications of the current conflict, while logical from the Israeli perspective as they see their survival at stake, will be unsettling for many, both domestically and internationally.
- Since the 1940’s, the United States has underpinned Israel’s security:
 - Israel is the United States’ closest ally in the region. Israel has benefited from their unique status by receiving large quantities of high-end U.S. Foreign Military Support, with a substantial portion of aid appropriated to them by Congress each year; this aid has been game-changing and essential to their existence.
 - Via its ‘veto’ power, the United States has historically protected Israel from international sanctions by the United Nations Security Council.
 - The U.S. will increase pressure for Israel to slow down or to reduce the IDF’s intensity in the Gaza Strip for humanitarian reasons, but the U.S. will continue its support to Israel as demonstrated by its growing military presence in the region to deter other actors.
- Other Islamic militants – such as Hezbollah (Lebanon) and Islamic Jihad (primarily in Gaza), various Palestinian groups in the West Bank, and the Houthis in Yemen have joined in sporadic attacks on Israel, but they have not fully committed to an attempt to weaken Israeli military actions with a second front.
- Iranian-linked militias have attacked U.S. Forces in Syria and Iraq, probably as an attempt to draw the U.S. directly into a broader conflict – this may become more problematic.

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