



The Sabra Report

IDF Troops Reach Khan Yunis

Emanuel Fabian, Times of Israel, December 6th 2023

Recap:

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) surrounded Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip. Hamas continued to fire rockets from Gaza toward Beersheba and Ashkelon. The IDF death toll since the start of the war is 89.

The Context:

- ✦ Hamas's Gaza chief Yahya Sinwar, the mastermind of its October 7th assault on Israel, is believed to be in Khan Yunis, hiding in Hamas's vast tunnel network [1]. One of the first Israeli hostages to have been freed by Hamas said that Sinwar "was with us three to four days after we arrived [2]." IDF Soldiers located 30 tunnel shafts and a weapons depot inside a mosque. Troops also found Hamas weaponry and tunnels in a mosque and school in Jabaliya.
- ✦ More than 75% of Gazans are thought to be displaced from the war, which was triggered after Hamas stormed across the border, killing 1,200 Israelis, and taking another 240 hostages, 140 of whom are believed to still be held in Gaza. Hamas says 16,248 Palestinians have been killed since the start of the war, a figure that largely matches Israel's assessment, which said it believes more than 5,000 of those killed are Hamas terrorists [3].
- ✦ The Biden administration urged Israel to do more to limit civilian harm, like using smaller bombs to collapse Hamas's tunnel network [4]. Before it launched its ground operation in North Gaza, the IDF urged residents to evacuate south as its troops advanced. Now, after the expiration of a temporary truce deal and with troops pushing further south, Israel published a map with civilian evacuation zones. Critics say the map is difficult to navigate on cellphones that most Palestinians use.
- ✦ This week, United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Antonio Guterres invoked Article 99, a rarely used mechanism that allows him to prompt a UN call for an immediate ceasefire. Israel says Guterres's actions "constitute support of Hamas." To be adopted, a resolution needs at least nine votes in favor but the United States, a veto holding permanent member, does not support any further action by the Security Council [5]. In October, Guterres outraged Israel when he said that Hamas's attacks "did not occur in a vacuum."

Conversation Points:

- ✦ Is it realistic for Israel to completely destroy Hamas? If not, what is a realistic goal?
- ✦ What is Israel's responsibility to the people of Gaza?
- ✦ Can Israel ensure a second hostage deal without militarily pressuring Hamas?

Notes:

1. [Does Hamas want to keep fighting Israel or start talking peace?](#), The Economist, November 30th, 2023
2. [Netanyahu says IDF encircling Hamas Gaza leader's house](#), Greg Norman, Fox News, December 6th, 2023
3. [War Intensifies in Southern Gaza, Where Civilians Say No Place Is Safe](#), Matthew Mpoke Bigg, Ben Hubbard and Michael Levenson, New York Times, December 5th, 2023
4. [Ibid.](#)
5. [UN chief 'endorsing Hamas terror' by invoking Article 99 - Israel charges](#), TOVAH LAZAROFF, Jerusalem Post, DECEMBER 7th 2023

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