

Hamas' New Tactic if Israel Decides to Invade Gaza – Analysis

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A Qassam fighter in Rafah, in southern Gaza. (Photo: video grab)

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In this analysis, translated from Al-Jazeera Arabic, the writer outlines potential tactics Gaza's resistance may employ if Israel continues its expanded military campaign in the Strip.

Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz raised the threat level against Gaza after delivering a “final warning of total destruction” in a video message, should the Palestinian Resistance Movement Hamas not release the Israeli prisoners.

Katz's warning came as the Israeli military announced the start of ground operations in northern and southern Gaza, following the breach of the ceasefire agreement and a surprise airstrike on March 18, 2025.

The attack resulted in the deaths of hundreds of Gazans, including political and governmental leaders, raising questions about what the Gaza resistance will look like as Israel resumes its ground operations in Gaza.

Ambush Tactics

Sources from Palestinian resistance factions revealed to Al Jazeera Net that they have reshaped their field strategies to confront the Israeli military, drawing on lessons learned from 471 days of direct confrontation since the Gaza war started on October 7, 2023.

According to the sources, the resistance is shifting towards a flexible and effective defensive strategy. This strategy combines accumulated field experience with guerrilla warfare techniques, leveraging an operational environment that the resistance has proven capable of adapting to in its favor.

The resistance will rely on the understanding that fighting groups will begin targeting soldiers once they settle in any locations they reach within Gaza. The resistance will absorb the initial ground advance, which is preceded by intensive airstrikes and fire belts, combined with significant destructive force to reach residential areas.

The sources assert that the upcoming confrontations will not be “traditional” and that armed groups will strike Israeli soldiers from unexpected angles. They will rely on advanced ambush tactics and surprise attacks behind the lines of the invasion, similar to those used previously in Beit Hanoun and northern Gaza, which resulted in significant losses for Israel.

This was despite Israel’s belief that it had eliminated resistance by invading the area and repeatedly demolishing its buildings.

Return of Eyal Zamir

Resistance factions are also mindful of the expected tactics of the new Israeli Chief of Staff, Eyal Zamir, based on his previous experience in the armored corps. If Zamir opts to send large army units into Gaza, the resistance plans to counter them by dividing fighters into small assault groups, ensuring their mobility and safety.

They will also use ambush tactics with explosive devices, which have proven effective in areas where Israeli forces have advanced. These ambushes have caused direct losses to Israeli officers and soldiers.

Previously, the resistance used unexploded Israeli shells to make improvised explosive devices, adapting them to the upcoming goals, which involved positioning fighters in the field without direct clashes. They will wait for the right time to target objectives accurately, maximizing their impact on Israeli forces.

Analyzing Past Engagements

The sources revealed that previous confrontations with regular Israeli forces or reserve units were thoroughly analyzed. The resistance will exploit weaknesses related to Israeli soldiers' morale and lack of experience in urban and tunnel warfare.

Through analyzing enemy behavior, the resistance has concluded that Israeli soldiers' motivation to fight has significantly declined. This is due to the long duration of the war, where Israel has not been able to achieve its stated goals: destroying the resistance's capabilities and securing the release of its prisoners through military pressure. This contrasts with the strong fighting spirit and experience that Palestinian fighters possess.

Furthermore, the Israeli military, frustrated by the political decisions of Netanyahu's government, has become unwilling to sustain further losses in an open-ended war with no political solution in sight.

Capturing Soldiers

The resistance factions do not rule out using any of the locally produced weapons in direct confrontation with Israeli soldiers. During the war, they succeeded in engaging the enemy forces within Gaza, using short-range missiles to disrupt their logistical plans and positioning areas.

The resistance relies on its experience and flexibility to withstand and conceal its movements, which Israeli forces fear might lead to a renewed cycle of attrition, one that they thought they had overcome.

The sources confirmed that the resistance would not miss any opportunity to capture Israeli soldiers, whether alive or deceased, to use them as leverage for military and political pressure. This tactic would put Israel in a difficult position, creating a scenario that is hard to bear and potentially altering the balance of field and political negotiations.

This approach was evident in a video released by the Al-Qassam Brigades, showing fighters dragging the body of an Israeli soldier through a tunnel during an Israeli incursion in the Jabaliya camp in May 2024.

In this context, the Hebrew website Hadashot B'zman reported that "those who claim through the media that Hamas has been dissolved are living in a fantasy. Hamas has resumed producing rockets in recent months, and worse, it has utilized unexploded weapon explosives."

The site added that "Hamas retains its capabilities and has not escalated attacks yet, but it is preparing for the Israeli military's operation in Gaza. Do not believe reports claiming Hamas has been deterred or weakened."

Similar sentiments have been conveyed by many Israeli officials and military analysts.

(AJA, PC)