

After 150 Days of Death and Destruction in Gaza, Israel Is Neither Stronger nor Safer

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With the war now having passed the 150-day mark, every Israeli should ask themselves honestly: Are we better off now than on October 6, 2023? Are we stronger? Safer? Do we have greater deterrence? Are we more popular? Prouder of ourselves? Are we more united? Better in any way? The incredible thing is that the answer to all these questions is unequivocally no.

Palestinian children in Khan Yunis, southern Gaza, this week. Credit: Said Khatib / AFP

These 150 days have been cruel and difficult and have done nothing to benefit Israel and will do nothing for it, neither in the short nor long term. On the contrary, Hamas has come out stronger. Thousands of its fighters have been killed, but it has become the hero of the Arab world. Still, most Israelis want at least 150 days [more of the same](#); there has been zero public opposition to the war, even after five months of death and destruction on an unprecedented scale, after Israel has become an outcast, hated across the world, bloodied and economically damaged.

There isn't one area in which the country is better off after these dark last few months – the darkest in its history. Israel is now a lot less safe than it was before the war, it faces the risk of a [regional escalation](#), global sanctions and the loss of American support. It is also a lot less democratic – the harm wreaked by the war on Israel's democratic institutions is greater even than that of the judicial coup – and the damages piling up will remain after the IDF withdraws from Gaza.

As for Israel's international status, this country has never been such a pariah; even our all-but guaranteed ties with the United States have deteriorated to a low we have never experienced before. The daily toll of fallen soldiers, the fact that most of the hostages have yet to be released; that tens of thousands of Israelis have been internally displaced, that half the country is a danger zone. The West Bank is [threatening to explode](#), and nothing can hide the bottomless hate that we have managed to sow in Gaza, the West Bank and the Arab world.

And no improvement can be seen on the horizon as long as Israel refuses stubbornly to every proposition for a fundamental change. Still, Israelis want more of the same, like a gambler who has lost all his money but is still convinced that one more bet will win him the jackpot.

With 100 Palestinian deaths every day, Israelis seem convinced that 30,000 more deaths will turn Gaza into a paradise, or at least a safe place. It's difficult to recall such blindness, even in Israel. Such a state of moral obtuseness is also difficult to recall. Let them go hungry and without water, let them choke, let them die – even the left and the media have adopted this way of thinking. Led with their eyes covered, no one stops to ask where we are going. The main thing is to push forward with the war because Hamas [wants it to stop](#) and we are here to show them what's what.

We have a duty to draw up a balance sheet - "What has Israel gotten out of the war - and then ask ourselves courageously: Should we have gone to war? Set aside the (justified) slogans about how no country would have overlooked such a cruel attack on its people, and a country's right to protect itself, and what would people have wanted Israel to do. After 150 days in which there is nothing to enter into the benefits column on this balance sheet, just heavy costs, we can start to doubt its wisdom from Israel's perspective.

We have said nothing yet of the shocking price paid by Gaza and its residents who, under the shadow of war, are suffering greater abuse than ever before.

Most Israelis - those for whom the plight of the Palestinians is of little interest and those who are even pleased by it, and there are many Israelis like that - need to ask themselves: Other than joy at Gaza's calamity, what else have we gotten out of this war? Look at the results. Things will only get worse. Is that what you really want?

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P.S.

• Haaretz. Mar 7, 2024:
<https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/2024-03-07/ty-article-opinion/.premium/after-150-days-of-death-and-destruction-in-gaza-israel-is-neither-stronger-nor-safer/0000018e-14d7-d7d3-abce-74ff8b640000>