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## When Will the Next War on Gaza Start?

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There are rising concerns to the Palestinians that Israel will launch a war against Gaza Strip, in exploitation of the current crisis in the Arab region, and in light of the emergence of real Israeli indicators, as well as Israel's continuing pursuance of the policy of "Security for Food". Israel had previously developed such a policy to put pressure on the Gaza Strip and to subjugate the Palestinian resistance factions, which have recently organized military parades in Gaza to convey certain messages to the Israeli leaders.

**This article aims to explain the war indicators and its expected scenarios, as follows:**

### **First: War Indicators:**

**There are various indicators that some depend on in saying that there is a possibility of a war outbreak in Gaza, including:**

The statements of Hamas leader, Mahmoud Al-Zahar, that Lieberman, the Zionist Minister of Defense, is "in need of an ear pinch", after the latter demanded that Hamas must hand over its weapons.

Lieberman's statements that he will not lift the blockade on the Gaza Strip except after Hamas delivers its arms, which was met by a statement of Yahia Mousa, the Hamas leader and member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, saying that the issue of the Palestinian resistance weapons is a red line".

The US State Department 's warning to American citizens to leave Gaza Strip.

The Israeli aircraft's launching of 70 airstrikes against Gaza Strip, which is considered the most violent attack since 2014. Only 48 hours later, the Palestinian resistance opened fire on Zionist ships off the coast of Gaza, after they approached Palestinian fishing boats, which is the first time that the resistance targets Zionist ships since the last aggression in 2014.

The Palestinian resistance's downing of an Israeli drone in northern Gaza.



## Second: War Barriers:

The conviction of both the Zionist state and Palestinian resistance that there will not be half solutions in the next war, i.e. it will be destructive for both parties. Though the war will be more destructive to Gaza due to the difference in the military force between the two parties, but the Zionist side knows well that its internal society cannot withstand wars for long periods.

The Palestinian resistance's fear that the next war may be the slam dunk to it in the light of the Arab, regional, and international rapprochement and alignment with the Zionist entity.

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's fear of the war failure and the resistance's success to inflict significant losses in the Israeli property, lives and economy, which may lead to toppling him.

The very difficult social and economic conditions suffered by the Gazans, which reduces its ability to withstand the war.

The continuity of the Turkish stance in supporting the Gaza Strip and rejecting any Zionist attacks against the coastal enclave, which was confirmed by Turkish Prime Minister's statements after Israel's latest airstrikes against Gaza. So, Israel fears that the war may cause tension for its relation with Turkey again.

## **There is a set of considerations that should be taken into consideration in interpreting the reasons of the Israeli desire for war, including:**

The Israeli security services know well that the blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip did not affect the strength of the Palestinian resistance, and that its strength is increasing continuously, especially in respect with "the strategy of tunnels", followed by the Palestinian resistance, as reports say that the tunnels have become deeper and longer, which means that they may reach Israeli border cities.

The ongoing region changes are in favor of the Zionists, especially after their rapprochement with Egypt which reached the extent of harmony, and the high tone of the Egyptian political authority's hostility towards Hamas, as well as the successes





of the Israeli diplomacy on its international relationships after the end of disputes with Turkey and Israel's strong rapprochement with Russia.

The Zionist entity's attempt to renovate its deterrence power which was shaken in the previous period because of the increasing strength of the resistance.

Netanyahu's desire to cover the corruption charges against him in the light of the investigations conducted by Israeli police with his assistants, with respect to the Israeli Prime Minister's receiving of bribes.

### **Third: Hamas and the Well-Studied Escalation:**

**The Palestinian resistance in Gaza may find itself moving towards a well-studied escalation against the occupation for several reasons, including:**

The bad economic conditions in Gaza due to the closure of the tunnels between Egypt and Gaza, and its attempts to escape forward by exporting the crisis to Israel.

Attempting to move the file of Gaza blockade in light of the international changes which have imposed a state of silence regarding the sufferings in Gaza, and Hamas' attempt to prove itself as an important player in the Palestinian arena, that cannot be surpassed through passing a peace agreement with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. Also, there is much talk about an intensive Egyptian movement coinciding with offers to hold regional conferences under the auspices of Egypt, and international conferences under the auspices of France, with a US approval and a Russian motivation.

**Within the framework of these considerations, we can say that there is an increased possibility that a war will break out against Gaza in the first half of 2017, for many reasons, including:**

The results of the investigations that are carried out by the Israeli police may take some time; mostly they may be declared at the beginning of next year. Netanyahu may, then, declare war against Gaza to cover the accusations against him. This style was usually used by previous Israeli leaders, such as Olmert, the former Israeli Prime Minister, who was accused of receiving a bribe estimated at 100 thousand dollars.



Hamas' anticipation of the results of the internal municipal elections (However, the Municipal elections have recently been suspended by the PA Supreme Court ) after choosing independent academic and professional candidates. for these elections. If that list failed to win the elections, Hamas might find itself compelled to involve in a new war to keep its position as an important figure in the Palestinian equation.

Regionally, Egypt may desire the war against Gaza to be at that time in order to be exploited by Al Sisi in his electoral propaganda. If the war succeeded in ending the Hamas' control over Gaza, Al Sisi will present himself, internally and regionally, as the savior of Israel and the world with regard to the latest fortified strongholds of Muslim Brotherhood.

#### **Fourth: Scenarios of the Next War**

##### **The First Scenario: A Time-Limited War:**

The next war may be significantly similar to the 2012 war, through limited clashes for few days only, aiming to achieve both Israel's and Hamas' desire to move the file of the Israeli prisoners, held by the Palestinian resistance, or due to Hamas' desire to make a swap to raise the popularity of the Palestinian resistance among the public, in addition to focusing on the worsening suffering of Gaza Strip which was affected by the accelerating regional events. This may be the preferred scenario to both Hamas and Israel.

##### **The Second Scenario: A War Similar to the 2014-War:**

In light of the existence of Lieberman as the Israeli Minister of the Defense, the things may be worse, i.e. a “destructive” war aiming to affect Hamas, by putting more pressure on it through targeting the infrastructure and the residential buildings, aiming at worsening the Gaza suffering, and prompting Hamas to offer concessions regarding the Israeli prisoners swap, or compelling Hamas to allow the Palestinian Authority to get back to Gaza Strip and lead its institutions, especially in Rafah Crossing.



## **The Third Scenario: A Destructive War and Occupying Gaza:**

**The scenario of occupying Gaza entirely is also taken into consideration by Israel due to:**

Israel's fear of a sudden escalation in the action and reaction, i.e. that the resistance may take a significant and sudden action that will embarrass the Israeli leaders, compelling it to follow this scenario.

Exploiting the bloody regional situation that will understand and accept significant numbers of killed people. This may also be accompanied with encouragement and funding from some Arab countries in order to end Hamas' control of Gaza.

Reaching a peace accord between the Palestinian National Authority and Israel, which will necessitate the removal of the obstacle before its application, i.e. the Palestinian resistance in Gaza.

## **Conclusion:**

Though it is difficult to weight any of the above scenarios, and the possibility that the war may start with the first scenario and end with the second or the third scenario, as a result of the changes associated with the battle, however, the second scenario is the closest to reality for many reasons, including: that Israel knows well that it will not fight a regular army in Gaza, that may collapse and end, but it will have to face a popular resistance that has its ideology and combat doctrine, which makes eliminating the resistance closer to "impossible", as there are about 100 thousand Palestinian fighters from all factions, who will be mostly fighting underground, which will lead to heavy losses that Israel will not be able withstand.