

Israel Needs Unconditional Surrender From Hamas

The Jewish state's goal in Gaza should be the same as the Allies' in Germany after World War II.

Wall Street Journal, By Jerome M. Marcus, Oct. 23, 2023



Israel needs to declare the precise goals of its Gaza campaign—for its own citizens and soldiers, and to establish the credibility of its efforts in the world's eyes. The “destruction” of Hamas has no meaning in international law and is too vague for Israelis being asked to sacrifice everything.

History provides an example of what Israel should do. At the end of World War II, the Allies' goal was clear: The German Third Reich must agree to an “unconditional surrender.” The Allies' demand of Germany should be the model for Israel now. Hamas's war crimes are equal in depravity to those of the Nazis; their magnitude is far less only

because Jews now have a fortified homeland and an Israeli army. Hamas and the Nazis also shared the goal of Jewish genocide. Following the Allies' example, Israel should announce that it will obtain Hamas's unconditional surrender.

In 1945, in the presence of representatives of the Allied Powers, German High Command officials signed military surrender documents—the Reims accord in France on May 7 and the Act of Military Surrender in Berlin on May 9. The documents required German soldiers to cease military operations. The Allies' control of German territory enabled them to enforce that order, which they did.

At the Potsdam Conference in the summer of 1945, the Allies agreed on a complete disarmament and demilitarization of Germany, the transfer of land from Germany to Poland and the Soviet Union, and the expulsion of German populations from the countries Germany had attacked. The Allies also provided for “de-Nazification”—removing Nazis from positions of authority, eliminating Nazi political organizations, and the arrest and trial of war criminals.

The Allies pursued the removal of Nazis from positions of authority only halfheartedly; but Nazi political parties and organizations were effectively suppressed, and the highest-ranking Nazi leaders were arrested, tried and punished, including by death.

Israel should follow in the Allies' steps. It must demand unconditional surrender. It must capture and, at least in the war's immediate aftermath, take complete control of Gaza. It must crush Hamas, killing or capturing its top leaders. Israel must announce that it will try Hamas's leaders in courts that it convenes for the trial of war crimes—similar to the Jerusalem District Court's 1961-62 trial of Adolph Eichmann, a Nazi official who played a central role in implementing Hitler's “Final Solution.” If found guilty, defendants must be executed, and Israel must carry out those sentences. (Israeli law provides for the death penalty in cases involving genocide or Nazi collaboration, and Eichmann is the only prisoner the state of Israel has executed.)

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has already made it clear that Israel has no desire to govern those who live in the Gaza strip. Just as the Allies worked together to govern Germany immediately after VE Day, Israel can seek partners in the initial government of Gaza. Its Abraham Accords allies—the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Morocco—are the natural source for such help. These Arab states have much

to gain from a Gaza that is at peace with its neighbors and free from the sickness Iran seeks to spread throughout the Middle East.

Germany's surrender enabled French citizens, even those just across the border from the Germans, to live securely and without fear. Israelis in Sderot and other border towns deserve the same. Israel should take a section of Gaza along the border and turn it into a security corridor to ensure the safety of its own citizens. Egypt should do the same on its border with Gaza to end the smuggling of commercial goods and weapons by the Muslim Brotherhood and other illegal groups that could again enable Iran to destabilize the region. Israel and the other Abraham Accords signatories should similarly declare such Islamist organizations out of bounds in a peaceful Gaza.

Israel has a 75-year history of improvising brilliantly as it goes. But clarifying and announcing its plans now for Gaza's future will promote the legitimacy of Israel's actions and help it garner support for the steps it must take to secure peace. History teaches us what Israel needs to do.

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