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Media hype and military blunders: The British role in Gaza

The botched mission to release Israeli prisoners of war in Gaza has exposed British and American military involvement, broadening Israel's war on Gaza into an international conflict, much like the US and UK have done with Ukraine.



(Photo Credit: The Cradle)

On 8 June, Israeli forces staged a **blood-spattered “rescue” operation** in the Palestinian refugee camp of Nuseirat. The brutal, blunt force swoop freed four prisoners, killed three others – including a US citizen – and left 274 Palestinians dead, with many more injured. The Israeli military also suffered casualties, including the death of a senior commander.

Despite Hamas **offering** since 8 October to release prisoners held in Gaza unharmed in exchange for a ceasefire and total withdrawal of occupation forces, this operation can only be seen as a costly failure for Israel as part of a broader strategic blunder.

Its military has failed to achieve any of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's [stated war aims](#) in eight months of conflict, and Tel Aviv's growing international isolation necessitated a dramatic PR spectacle.

Spilling the beans

Western media has eagerly taken the bait, [cheering](#) the "heroic" effort widely. [One outlet](#) dubbed the fiasco a "miraculous triumph." [Another celebrated](#) the "daring" retrieval of "heavily guarded" hostages.

Photos and biographies of the four freed individuals have been [prominently disseminated](#). Mawkish [human interest stories](#) abound. Out of this nauseating deluge, however, the *New York Times* quietly issued a [bombshell disclosure](#). British and American intelligence officials and "hostage recovery" specialists played a central role in the "rescue" operation.

According to the report, these UK and US operatives have been stationed in the occupation state throughout the war, "providing intelligence and other logistical support" and "collecting and analyzing information" in service of releasing Israeli captives and locating Hamas higher-ups.

London and Washington have, purportedly, "been able to provide intelligence from the air and cyberspace that Israel cannot collect on its own." Meanwhile, "the Pentagon and the CIA have been providing information collected from drone flights over Gaza, communications intercepts and other sources."

'Counter-Terrorist Operations'

That this account is a misleading cover story should be self-evident. If British and US intelligence has truly, since 7 October, been working from Tel Aviv to track down Hamas leaders and release prisoners, their efforts have been as ineffective as the "rescue" operation itself.

Mainstream sources [acknowledge](#) that Hamas remains largely unscathed, and IOF spokespeople claim [120 prisoners](#) are still in Gaza. This suggests a different rationale for the covert British presence within Israel.

A [D-notice](#) from Britain's Ministry of Defence on 28 October 2023 instructed domestic news outlets not to mention that the elite Special Air Service (SAS) was "deployed to sensitive areas" of West Asia, conducting "hostage rescue/evacuation operations."

[The Ministry of Defence] aims to prevent inadvertent disclosure of classified information about Special Forces and other units engaged in security, intelligence and counter-terrorist operations [in Gaza], including their methods, techniques and activities.

Western forces' on standby'

This censorship was likely prompted by British tabloids [revealing](#) that the SAS was “on standby” at bases in Cyprus “to rescue hostages held captive in Gaza.” An SAS veteran described such an effort as almost inevitably suicidal:

This situation in Gaza is unique, in terms of trying to locate the hostages and find safe passage out. There's a lot of confusion with what's going on over there right now. Finding the right stronghold where hostages are being held will be tough – then you have to safely move to that location, find the hostages, then leave. From a planning perspective, it will be a complete and utter nightmare. It could end in disaster.

Despite the risks, the Israeli “rescue” operation proceeded, aiming to secure a propaganda win for Tel Aviv and legitimize the involvement of British and US forces in Gaza. The *New York Times* investigation subtly hinted at a publicly expanded role for Britain and the US in the assault on Gaza while confirming their resolve to support Israel’s actions.

In justifying Washington’s involvement, the outlet claimed this support was provided “in large measure ... because American officials believe the best way to persuade Israel to end the war is to get back its hostages and capture or kill top Hamas leaders.”

An editorial in the *Daily Telegraph* echoed this sentiment in an un-bylines editorial entitled “We must back Israel’s efforts to rescue hostages,” declaring, “[the] successful rescue operation is a timely reminder of what Israel is fighting for, and the fundamental justice of its cause,” while complaining that Tel Aviv’s “military operations have been subjected to a level of scrutiny that is all but impossible to satisfy”:

Israel’s dogged commitment to rescuing the hostages and destroying Hamas stand in marked contrast to the weakness of the West in supporting its efforts.

It appears that, similar to how western powers have systematically breached Russia’s red lines, their direct participation in Gaza is intended to be gradually normalized.

Open [French threats](#) in March to deploy troops to Odessa were [knocked back](#) by Russian officials. Ever since, [a stream](#) of public statements and media reporting has indicated that those soldiers will nonetheless arrive [in the form](#) of “advisers” and [trainers](#).

Lebanon’s strategic significance

The once-feared Israeli military behemoth has been consistently [humiliated](#) in direct combat with the Palestinian resistance in Gaza and its exchange of heavy fire with the Lebanese resistance movement, Hezbollah. As *The Cradle* has reported, the occupation state is [concealing](#) heavy losses on every front it is engaged in.

Despite this, Tel Aviv is openly gearing up for an [all-out war with Lebanon](#). *The Cradle* has [also revealed](#) British efforts to gain unfettered access to Lebanon's territories – ground, air, and sea territory – for its soldiers, bypassing the need for “prior diplomatic authorization” for its “emergency missions.”

In the reported agreement between London and Beirut – abandoned after the proposal was leaked to the Lebanese media – British soldiers would have been permitted to travel in uniform with their weapons visible anywhere in Lebanon while enjoying immunity from arrest or prosecution for committing any crime.

It can be speculated that London anticipated the Gaza conflict expanding into a wider regional war and sought to cement its presence in the Levant in advance, potentially to ensure that outcome. Israel's [defeat by Hezbollah](#) in 2006, along with its current military woes, underlines that Tel Aviv would be incapable of defeating the Lebanese resistance without extensive foreign support.

The strategic positioning of British and US forces exposes their barefaced commitment to backing Israel despite the significant risks of political blowback and the potential for further regional destabilization.

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