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Israel's new 'Pasha of Gaza'

Tel Aviv's appointment of a high-ranking military official to manage Gaza's civilian affairs is a strategic Israeli bid to craft a post-conflict reality and sidestep a ceasefire agreement.



(Photo Credit: The Cradle)

As part of a long-term strategy to exert greater control over Gaza, last week, the Israeli occupation army [appointed](#) Elad Goren as the first “head of the humanitarian-civil effort in the Gaza Strip.” This new role, focused on administering civilian affairs in Gaza, raises important questions about Tel Aviv's intentions and its vision for the future of the decimated and besieged enclave.

Goren's appointment comes as the brutal war on Gaza, entering its 11th month, has not only tested the resilience of the occupation military but also led to significant and ongoing repercussions on the ground.

Managing the crisis Israel created

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The creation of this new position within the Defense Ministry's Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) unit represents a notable shift in Israel's approach to Gaza, indicating a movement toward more direct management of civilian affairs in the strip.

This decision is part of a broader strategy by the Israeli occupation to tighten its grip on Gaza while attempting to reshape the political dynamics to reduce the influence of Hamas. A similar [divide-and-rule strategy](#) has been employed in the West Bank to sow discord between the governing Palestinian Authority (PA) and the resistance factions there.

Goren's role encompasses managing humanitarian aid, overseeing the operation of border crossings, restoring infrastructure destroyed by the Israelis, and coordinating with international aid organizations. Additionally, his appointment is seen as part of the occupation state's efforts to establish a new framework for managing the Rafah crossing with Egypt, Gaza's critical access point to the outside world, already under a stringent Israeli blockade.

According to the [occupation army](#), the new role will "deal with the integration and implementation of the humanitarian effort in the Gaza Strip and the coordination with the international community, in a way that will allow the implementation of the humanitarian effort while upholding the security interests of the State of Israel."

Strategic dimensions of installing Goren

Rather than addressing the [pressing humanitarian crisis](#) in the strip that comes courtesy of the occupation army's brutal 10-month military assault on the strip, Goren's appointment should be seen as a strategic move by Israel to solidify its presence and influence in Gaza. By placing a high-ranking military official (Goren was promoted to brigadier general) in charge of civilian affairs, Israel signals its intent to maintain direct control over Gaza's administration, potentially transforming the region into a zone of indirect military governance "[for years to come](#)."

This move aligns with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's broader strategy to weaken Hamas and foster an alternative governance structure more amenable to Israeli interests. However, this approach is not without challenges.

The complexities of managing Gaza's traumatized and displaced Palestinian population, coupled with growing international scrutiny and pressure, will complicate Tel Aviv's efforts to assert its control. Additionally, the persistent resistance from Palestinian factions and their regional allies remains a formidable barrier to any attempt to alter the status quo.

Resisting plans to govern Gaza

Indeed, the multi-front conflict has taken its toll on the Israeli military, which has faced significant losses in confrontations with Palestinian resistance groups and [engagements in the north](#) with Hezbollah. This attrition highlights Israel's difficulty in achieving its stated military objectives, with further escalation likely following the recent spate of high-profile assassinations. Palestinian resistance movements could capitalize on Israel's troop attrition to bolster their capabilities and counter Tel Aviv's plans for permanent control over Gaza. Moreover, Israel struggles to gain international support for its actions in Gaza, further complicated by mounting [domestic unrest](#) from the Netanyahu government's refusal to negotiate a ceasefire deal with Hamas that would remove Israeli troops from the territory. As such, Palestinian resistance should focus on international advocacy, highlighting Israeli violations and galvanizing global opinion to increase diplomatic pressure on Israel to exit the strip entirely. Strengthening national unity among Palestinian factions is also crucial; a unified front is vital to effectively counter Israel's efforts to fragment Palestinian society and weaken the resistance.

Several scenarios could emerge following the latest steps by the occupation state toward its post-war plans for Gaza. If diplomatic efforts fail or no ceasefire agreement is reached, Gaza could experience increased military confrontations as Israel seeks to impose new realities and governance.

In such a case, Palestinian resistance would need to escalate military operations and enhance coordination among the factions to effectively counter Israeli strategies.

Alternatively, if Palestinian resistance successfully mobilizes international opinion, heightened diplomatic pressure could force Israel to halt its military plans in Gaza. This scenario might lead to a ceasefire backed by international guarantees, preventing Israel from reverting to its previous policies.

Political strategy with armed pressure

However, the ongoing conflict and blockade could exacerbate Gaza's humanitarian crisis, posing new setbacks for the resistance in terms of meeting the population's basic needs. Addressing this crisis would require close cooperation with international organizations to mitigate the impact on civilians.

Elad Goren's appointment as head of the "humanitarian-civil" effort in Gaza is a clear indication of Israel's strategic intent to tighten its control over the strip and undermine the resistance. More likely than not, this move will be met with increased Palestinian resistance, as we have seen in the Philadelphi and Netzarim corridors.

It is crucial for the resistance to continue strengthening its operational capacity while intensifying diplomatic efforts to thwart any Israeli attempts to impose a new order in Gaza. Fostering national unity and maintaining popular support among Palestinians is essential to confronting these threats.

Ultimately, the Palestinian resistance remains a key factor in scuttling Israeli plans to permanently occupy and govern Gaza. No settlement or military strategy will succeed as long as Palestinians remain fully committed to their land and rights.