



Did Israel's Gaza Operation Restore Deterrence?

While Operation Breaking Dawn has seen a slight revival of Israeli deterrence thanks to the return of the threat of preemptive action, deterrence was also degraded by letting Hamas off the hook.

by Zaki Shalom and Jacob Aaron Collier / August 16, 2022

Between August 5 and 7, Israel conducted its third operation in the Gaza Strip in four years. Dubbed “Operation Breaking Dawn,” the conflict saw the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) trade blows with Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and other militant groups in the strip, with the notable exception of the most dominant and powerful authority in Gaza—Hamas.

The impetus for this round of fighting appears to have been the arrest of Bassam al-Saadi—an almost seventy-year-old PIJ leader in the West Bank—early last week. The arrest and the video that emerged from it, which showed al-Saadi being dragged out onto the street by Israeli forces, undoubtedly served to inflame the tensions that already existed.

In the aftermath, Israel claimed that the IDF had solid intelligence that PIJ was planning anti-tank guided missile attacks on Israeli buses, trains, and border communities as a form of retaliation. Consequently, Israel locked down large communities in the south and implemented road closures.

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