



Israel claims to be close to destroying Hamas. But is it?

While Hamas has suffered heavy damage, there is little indication that Israel is close to achieving its destruction

By Kieron Monks / March 15, 2024

“We will finish the job in Rafah,” said Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in a speech to a US audience this week, reiterating his commitment to the destruction of Hamas despite growing international pressure for a ceasefire in Gaza.

[...]

Professor Kobi Michael, a military analyst at the Israeli think-tanks the Institute for National Security Studies and the Misgav Institute, said the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) has made progress but Hamas could endure in some form for decades.

“We have succeeded in eliminating almost 20 of their 24 battalions – the regular army of Hamas in Gaza,” he said. “In addition, we have destroyed many strategic assets and manufacturers of Hamas.”

But the group “would survive politically”, he added. “In this war we are dealing with the military and governmental dimensions of Hamas. In the ideological dimension it will be a challenge because I don’t see that it disappears from the Palestinian political scene.”

Hamas will probably be able to regenerate itself with diminished capacity, Dr Michael said, so that its gunmen could harass Israeli forces but without the advanced rocket capabilities displayed during this war.

“This will be ongoing and it might last for dozens of years,” he said.

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