

Chapter 5: Completing the Military Effort to Dismantle Hamas's Capabilities

The recommendation to cease the current campaign and transition to a different operational mode does not prevent action in Rafah but requires adopting a different course of action and timing that serves the guiding strategic concept. Therefore, it is advisable to complete the operational effort that will ensure there is no looming threat from Rafah to the settlements in the south of Israel, and that the border between Israel and Egypt will not become a channel for smuggling, particularly of weapons, into the Gaza Strip. To this end, a coordinated solution with Israel is necessary, to be executed by Egypt and the Americans, while Israel should be kept informed.

Alternative conditions for action in Rafah (When do we not have to act there?):

1. Surrender, destruction, or exile of Yahya Sinwar and Mohammed Deif;
2. Surrender of the Hamas battalions.

If these conditions are not met, the required operational achievements are:

1. Targeted elimination of the commanders;
2. Demolition of underground infrastructure (strategic, operational, economic);
3. Destruction of combat infrastructure: tunnels, firing positions, operational facilities, launching infrastructure;
4. Blockade of the Philadelphi Corridor and sealing it above and below ground.

These objectives can be advanced through various methods, including a different combination of ground maneuver, aerial fire, and special operations. Cooperation with the United States and Egypt is also necessary in all matters related to closing the border axis and the Rafah crossing.

The timing of the action is less urgent than other issues mentioned in this document (as long as a hostage deal has been reached and, as part of the cessation of fighting, normalcy has returned to the northern region—as detailed in the next chapter). This is an important operation, albeit complex and limited, that can be implemented in the future as well.