

Kerem Shalom attack proves Rafah action is necessary

written by Meir Ben Shabbat | 06.05.2024

The barrage of rockets and mortars towards Kerem Shalom on Sunday is Hamas' response to those who questioned the necessity of an Israeli military operation in the Rafah area. It reflects the self-confidence of Hamas' commanders, who did not hesitate to initiate such an attack from a humanitarian area - even in the midst of critical negotiations for the organization and despite the cost of damaging a vital supply line for the Gazan population.

The attack aims to rekindle the zeal and vigor of Hamas' ground forces while sending a clear message to the public that the group's call for a cessation of hostilities stems from a position of power - not capitulation or weariness. The results of the attack also illustrate the danger of prolonged waiting and hesitation on the Israeli side.

One does not need to be an intelligence officer to understand that Hamas draws great encouragement from the positions of the US and the attitude it displays towards Israel regarding the war in Gaza. In this monstrous organization, they understand that the Biden administration is striving to end the war through a deal involving the release of the Israeli hostages, without achieving any of Israel's objectives; a deal that would allow Hamas to recover militarily and upgrade its status not only in the Gaza Strip but also in the West Bank and the region as a whole.

In the meantime, this administration is tying Israel's hands from taking action in Rafah, forcing it to increase humanitarian aid despite it reaching Hamas' control, pressing it to open the Erez Crossing that was attacked by Hamas' savages on Oct. 7 and implement ideas like the maritime corridor the terrorist organization could only dream of.

In addition, it allows the international community to make decisions that undermine Israel's status and hints that the stockpile of pressure tactics at its disposal has not yet been exhausted.

When its work is done by others, all that remains for Hamas is to continue

insisting on its exaggerated demands in the negotiations, buy time, exploit the supply to equip its fighters, re-establish its rule, and prepare its forces for the continuation of the campaign - not only for defense but also for attack. It must be taken into account that under the cover of the reality that has developed in Rafah, it also manages to smuggle or produce means of combat even during this period.

Israel must completely close the Kerem Shalom Crossing and act forcefully, without unnecessary risks, to crush Hamas in Rafah and shape a new reality in the area between Gaza and Egypt, without relying on international arrangements that have never proved themselves.

Israel will remember and appreciate President Joe Biden's support for it at the onset of the war, but it cannot back down from the just goals it has defined and which have also received his backing.

Published in Israel Hayom, May 6, 2024.