

# **‘Fantasies and Failures’: Israeli Analyst Slams Gaza War Strategy**

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Gaza aid center was overrun by starving crowds. (Photo: video grab)

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## **Staff**

Israeli analyst Michael Milstein says Israel remains stuck between two failed options in Gaza, as Hamas retains control and strategic goals collapse.

Following the US-mediated ceasefire between Israel and Iran, the Israeli government is once again facing a familiar dilemma in Gaza. Its key objectives, namely dismantling Hamas' political and military infrastructure and securing the release of all captives, remain unmet, according to former Israeli intelligence officer Michael Milstein.

In an article published on Monday in the Israeli newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth, Milstein, who heads the Palestinian Studies Forum at Tel Aviv University's Dayan Center, argues that Hamas continues to function as a cohesive and dominant force in Gaza, resisting Israeli efforts to dismantle its authority.

## **No Viable Alternative to Hamas**

"Israel has made a big detour to discover that it is facing the same strategic T-junction it faced over a year ago, caught between two bad options: " Milstein wrote: "a full-scale occupation of Gaza or a costly compromise that ends the war and withdraws from the Strip."

Three months after its genocidal campaign resumed in Gaza, Israel's core dilemma remains unresolved, according to the Israeli analyst.

Despite the assassination of several commanders, Hamas "is still dominant on the ground – it manages to conduct fighting and control the public space," the report said. "There is no chaos, as is prevalent in Israeli discourse," Milstein noted.

Moreover, efforts to pressure Hamas into a prisoner exchange have yielded little, with the sole exception being the release of an Israeli-American soldier, described as a “gesture to US President Donald Trump” rather than a concession to Israel.

At the same time, attempts to establish alternative governance models in Gaza, such as local militias or aid distribution mechanisms, have so far failed, he adds.

### **Strategic ‘Fantasies’**

Milstein criticizes unrealistic expectations in Israeli public discourse, which he describes as “fantasies”.

The first one is the belief that Hamas can be eliminated swiftly, without serious discussion of the consequences of reoccupying Gaza. He warns that calls for full occupation are largely ideological, masquerading as strategic necessity.

The second one is “the possibility of convincing Arab elements to take responsibility for the Strip (as) no country has agreed to this,” he noted.

The third one is “the establishment of enclaves controlled by dubious power elements as an alternative to Hamas,” such as the militia led by Yasser Abu Shabab.

The most troubling fantasy, in his opinion, is the idea—linked to Trump’s plans—of forcibly depopulating Gaza. He points out that “no country in the world supports or is willing to assist in such a project.”

Milstein tied the Gaza war to broader regional dynamics, especially with Iran. Continued war in Gaza, he argued, drains Israel’s military capacity, especially its reserve forces, and saps political attention from the Iranian front. It also exacerbates domestic political rifts and increases Israel’s diplomatic isolation.

Milstein concluded that transforming Gaza’s reality will require three conditions that, for now, are out of reach: a clear and robust plan, national consensus, and international support.

*(The Palestine Chronicle)*