



A Statement from the Chief of the General Staff, LTG Herzi Halevi, to the Media

We are in the midst of a war.

We have advanced to another significant step and IDF troops are now engaged in a ground operation in the northern Gaza Strip. For the last few days, IDF soldiers have been operating in Gaza City and are encircling it from several directions, increasing our entries, as well as our achievements.

The soldiers are fighting in an urban, crowded and complex area that necessitates fighting in a very professional and courageous way.

The ground forces are supported by precise intelligence, with supporting fire from the air and the sea. This partnership is our secret. It increases our achievements and make combat much more effective.

The soldiers are conducting close combat against a cruel enemy, but with a clear advantage on our side -
the camaraderie and spirit of battle that flows in our veins,
the spirit of Israeli society
and the righteousness of our path
which accompanies us all the time and is felt deeply and very important.



This war has a painful and difficult price,
this is an integral part of ensuring our security here.
We have lost the best of our sons in the fighting,
we embrace their families and with their spirit and memory, we
will continue and we will win.

This week, we were all moved when the soldier Ori Megidish
returned to her family, a moment of unity, a shared moment.
I dare say, after years of rich operational service, we had a
dramatic night during this rescue operation. With complex
decisions, with risks and with a happy ending.

Ori is of course a whole world, but we also know that this rescue
operation was a drop in the ocean. We have a deep commitment
to do everything needed to bring home the hostages - all of them.

We remain on high alert in all arenas.

Operating on the northern border,
determinedly fighting Palestinian terrorism in Judea and
Samaria

- with an emphasis on the Hamas terrorist organization,
And all the time committed to being ready for expanding to
additional arenas.

The IAF is operating in the Gaza Strip with great force and with
great distinction.



But make no mistake - less than half of the total strength of the IAF is operating in the Gaza Strip!

Most of the force is prepared and ready, with bombs on the wings and people who are ready to be scrambled at any moment to the planes,

to go out and strike in other arenas as soon as required.

We are fighting in the name of the sanctity of life, against an enemy who has engraved death and destruction on their flag.

We are fighting for our right, and the right of future generations, to live here safely and prosper in our homeland. This is our home - we have no other country.

In the face of absolute evil, we act with composure, intelligence and determination. We will fight as warriors, with a sharp compass of values in our hands, our country was established on these things, which is also surrounded by enemies.

The IDF fights on the front lines, but does not forget the home front. Our soldiers, of the IDF, of the State of Israel are in the communities, in the dormitories of the evacuees, accompanying the bereaved families and the families of the hostages. It is a broad national effort that touches and tries to bring good everywhere.



We will lead this fighting in the light of the objective, in our hearts - the Israeli people that strengthen us from behind, and for a moment we will not forget what we are fighting for:

A child riding a bicycle in a kibbutz, a couple at their wedding creating another Israeli home, our parents, our grandparents, the builders of this country, who put their trust in us, while we fight for them. For our own sake.

We will fight for that and for life as a free people in our country. The people's army, from the people, and its mission is to ensure our continued existence here and our continued prosperity here in our country.

In recent days I have been visiting the troops in the field a lot. I met reservists who came from the very edges of the world to exercise their right to defend the country, I met young soldiers who just finished the training course and insist on entering and joining the fighting, participating in the mission of defending our home;

I meet many commanders who lead their men with courage, professionalism and determination, all with great talent.

I am very proud to stand at their head, and know that the State of Israel, the people of Israel, have someone to trust.
