

After DM Katz Approves Gaza City Takeover Plans, IDF Calls Up 60,000 Reservists for New Offensive

Defense Minister Israel Katz approved the IDF's plans for the takeover of Gaza City, presented to him by Chief of Staff . Eyal Zamir on Wednesday.

Katz named the campaign Operation "Gideon's Chariots II", indicating that the Ministry of Defense and the IDF see it as the continuation of Operation Gideon's Chariots, which began in May. During a visit to the Gaza Strip on Sunday, Zamir said, "Soon we will move on to the next stage of Operation Gideon's Chariots, in which we will continue to deepen the harm to Hamas in Gaza City until its defeat."

Katz and Zamir were joined by several other commanding officers, including the head of the Military Intelligence Directorate, the head of the Military Operations Directorate, the head of Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories, and representatives from the Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet).

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To prepare for the large-scale operation, the military will begin issuing call-up orders for about 60,000 reserve soldiers, starting as early as Wednesday.

Between 40,000 and 50,000 troops will be ordered to report for duty on Sept. 2, with the remainder to be called up at later dates.

The Times of Israel (TOI) reported that roughly 130,000 reservists are expected to serve during Operation Gideon's Chariots II, many of them backfilling positions on other fronts as active-duty soldiers are redeployed to Gaza.

Five full IDF divisions are slated to join the offensive, organized into 14 brigade-level combat teams that will combine infantry, tanks, artillery, and combat engineering units.



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According to the IDF, the more recent, smaller operations on the outskirts of Gaza City – in Zeitoun and Jabaliya –are the first steps in preparing for the larger offensive on the ground.

Zamir had previously declared Operation Gideon's Chariots to have met its objectives, saying, " Hamas no longer possesses the same capabilities it had before the operation; we have dealt it a severe blow."

During that operation, the IDF took over operational control of around 75% of the Gaza Strip, as it attempted to exert pressure on Hamas to agree to a hostage-ceasefire deal.

So far, no hostage-ceasefire deal between Israel and the Hamas terror group has been agreed upon, leading some Israelis to increase protests calling for a comprehensive deal, even if it requires leaving Hamas in power.

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Despite recent surveys indicating that many Israelis prefer a hostage deal, even at the expense of defeating Hamas, a recent poll found that a slight majority of Jewish Israelis support defeating Hamas militarily.

The first stage of Operation Gideon's Chariots II is expected to focus on establishing additional humanitarian infrastructure in southern Gaza, reflected in the recent decision to allow tents and shelter equipment back in, ahead of possible evacuation warnings for Gaza City's civilian population in the coming days.

"As part of the preparations to move the population from Gaza City to the southern Gaza Strip, talks have begun with international organizations to recruit them to establish additional field hospitals in the south, and there is a positive response to this," a security official told the TOI.

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The IDF believes Gaza City is the stronghold of Hamas' last remaining full battalion, though the terror group also maintains a significant presence in the central camps area.

The TOI claims that Palestinians will have until Oct. 7 to evacuate Gaza City ahead of the start of the IDF's ground campaign to defeat Hamas in its last stronghold.

Katz's approval of the IDF's plans comes as the Israeli government reviews a truce proposal that Hamas claims to have agreed to. Although details remain unclear, reports suggest the deal would involve the release of 10 living hostages and the return of 18 bodies in exchange for at least 200 Palestinian security prisoners, including several serving life sentences.

The Israeli government's response is expected soon.

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