



Why Hamas Will Not Disarm, Dissolve, or Fade—and Why It Will Try to Reconstitute



A Report By The Abraham Global Peace Initiative, a Canadian think-tank defending freedom, democracy and human rights.

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For Media Inquiries: media@agpi.ca or office@agpi.ca

Executive summary

Despite battlefield losses and severe governance strain, Hamas retains the intent, networks, and organizational know-how to continue armed struggle and rebuild. Its ideology sanctifies “resistance,” it faces internal and external rivals that reward coercive power, and it still commands clandestine finance, cadre discipline, and a social-control apparatus inside Gaza. Current ceasefire language that contemplates demilitarization collides with these fundamentals, making voluntary disarmament highly improbable. [The Washington Institute+2ACLED+2](#)

1) Ideology and organizational DNA make disarmament a non-starter

Hamas’s foundational texts—its 1988 charter and the 2017 “Document of General Principles and Policies”—enshrine armed “resistance” as the path and explicitly reject recognizing Israel. The 2017 document softened rhetoric for external consumption, but it did not revoke the 1988 covenant nor renounce armed struggle, preserving maximalist goals “from the river to the sea.” Movements built around violence rarely disarm absent decisive defeat plus credible alternatives. [Avalon Project+2Intelligence Resource Program+2](#)

Recent expert analysis is blunt: “Hamas is not done fighting,” and past attempts to box the group out of governance or coerce demilitarization have failed because it prioritizes preserving military and political standing over diplomatic gains. [The Washington Institute](#)

2) Internal survival incentives: guns equal authority

Hamas leaders fear not only Israel but also domestic rivals. Public reporting in October 2025 documented Hamas redeploying forces, conducting raids, and executing alleged collaborators and rival gunmen to re-assert control after an Israeli pullback—classic insurgent consolidation behavior. Laying down arms would expose leaders and cadres to revenge, factional challenge, and loss of territorial control. [Wall Street Journal+1](#)

Israeli historian Benny Morris captured the logic succinctly: Hamas will not disarm because it needs weapons against Israel *and* to deter internal enemies. [The Tribune](#)

3) Embeddedness in Gaza’s governance and society

Even after two years of war, ACLED data and field reporting show remnants of Hamas’s civil administration, policing, and municipal management continued to function intermittently—paying partial salaries in cash, redeploying police during pauses, and leveraging emergency

committees tied to loyal clans. This institutional depth helps the movement survive shocks and rebound. [ACLED](#)

As long as no credible alternative governance takes root, the group's networks and capacity for coercion (and patronage) sustain its influence. ACLED's assessment: Hamas is battered but maintains guerrilla capability and social control; insurgency can continue "for the foreseeable future." [ACLED](#)

4) External sponsorship, finance, and procurement pathways

U.S. and UK sanctions rounds since 2023 detail persistent financial facilitation networks (including charities, cyber actors, and Iran-linked channels). These networks are adaptable and diaspora-enabled, making total cutoff difficult. [U.S. Department of the Treasury+1](#)

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has long provided money, training, and know-how to Hamas and other proxies; mainstream primers and research briefings underscore Tehran's sustained role. Even with interdictions, such backing lowers Hamas's costs to reconstitute. [Council on Foreign Relations+1](#)

On the ground, extensive tunneling and smuggling ecosystems—historically through the Philadelphia Corridor—created resilient logistics for weapons and cash. Israel's intermittent control of that border area disrupts but does not erase the know-how or demand. [The Guardian+1](#)

5) Military adaptation and reconstitution playbook

Conflict datasets indicate Hamas shifted to classic guerrilla/IED tactics, ambushes from surviving tunnels, and booby-traps—requiring limited training and enabling rapid replenishment of small cells. Analysts note the group has replenished ranks and can still execute complex raids. This is the standard insurgent "go to ground, rearm, reappear" playbook seen in other theaters. [ACLED](#)

CSIS and other institutes warn that absent a credible "day after" plan, prolonged Israeli security control and governance vacuums risk fueling a persistent insurgency in which Hamas remains the strongest organization. [CSIS+1](#)

6) Negotiation dynamics: why demobilization clauses are unlikely to stick

Think-tank reviews of the October 2025 ceasefire framework and regional commentary highlight that disarmament is the central sticking point: Hamas has not publicly committed to full disarmament; at most, it has floated limits or sequencing tied to political outcomes it deems acceptable. In parallel, U.S. and Israeli leaders demanding immediate disarmament have

threatened coercion—positions that harden Hamas’s refusal while it consolidates.

[Brookings+2CSIS+2](#)

Experience in other conflicts shows insurgents only surrender arms when credible security guarantees, power-sharing, and enforcement are in place. None of those pillars exists in Gaza today. [RAND Corporation+1](#)

7) Cost-imposing environment without decisive defeat

Independent monitoring underscores that, even after massive damage, Hamas remains “the strongest organization in Gaza.” Grinding counterinsurgency in dense urban terrain raises occupier costs and incentivizes the movement to wait out opponents while rebuilding clandestinely—especially if reconstruction aid, cross-border trade, and refugee flows can be skimmed or taxed in the future. [CSIS](#)

8) What to watch—reconstitution indicators

- **Cadre finance:** cash salary payments resuming to security forces; renewed taxation systems. [ACLED](#)
- **Command coherence:** coordinated IED/ambush patterns and multi-cell raids after lulls. [ACLED](#)
- **Border logistics:** sustained interdictions or new evidence of smuggling workarounds despite Israeli moves along Rafah/Philadelphia. [AP News](#)
- **Political control:** arrests/executions of rivals and reactivation of police/ministries during pauses. [Wall Street Journal](#)

9) Policy implications (brief)

1. **Plan for containment, not collapse.** Any strategy premised on Hamas self-disarming is likely to fail; enforcement and verification mechanisms would have to be external and robust. [IISS](#)
2. **Create a credible alternative authority.** Without viable governance and security substitutes, coercion alone produces vacuums Hamas can fill. [ACLED](#)
3. **Attack the lifeblood.** Prioritize sanctions enforcement, diaspora facilitators, and border/tunnel interdiction while anticipating adaptation. [U.S. Department of the Treasury+1](#)
4. **Sequence incentives carefully.** DDR-style programs only work with concrete power-sharing, amnesties, and third-party guarantees—none currently accepted by key actors. [CSIS](#)

10. Aid Agencies and the Reintegration Risk

As the international community pivots toward Gaza's reconstruction, there is a growing push by UN agencies and non-governmental organizations — particularly **UNRWA** — to re-establish operations inside the territory. History suggests this reintegration will require cooperation, whether direct or tacit, with Hamas's remaining administrative networks.

In previous post-conflict cycles, UNRWA and other aid agencies relied on Hamas-controlled ministries, police, and local contractors to deliver assistance, distribute food, and manage logistics. This arrangement effectively **subsidized Hamas's rule**, freeing its own resources for military rebuilding. Unless strict international oversight is imposed, the same pattern is poised to repeat.

By acting as a de facto intermediary between global donors and Gaza's population, Hamas can once again:

- Redirect or tax aid deliveries to reward loyalists and punish opponents.
- Channel reconstruction materials into tunnel rebuilding or weapons production.
- Use the visibility of UN and NGO partnerships to project legitimacy and control.

Reintegration of UNRWA without fundamental structural reform would, in effect, **financially oxygenate Hamas at its weakest moment**, ensuring its survival under humanitarian cover.

AGPI continues to warn that **aid without accountability becomes complicity** — and that any future relief framework must exclude Hamas-linked intermediaries, subject every transaction to independent audit, and ensure that assistance reaches civilians rather than their oppressors.

A NOTEWORTHY - ISRAELI INTELLIGENCE REPORT:

"Israeli Intelligence provided to the UN's Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) identified at least 18 UNRWA employees who actively participated in the October 7th massacre, including in killings, abductions, and operational support to Hamas' invading forces.

Evidence included among others:

- Video footage showing staff members in Israeli communities during the attack.
- Phone call recordings and cellphone triangulation confirming their presence and coordination.
- Documentation of hostage abductions, including an UNRWA social worker seen loading the body of a murdered civilian into a vehicle.

These individuals continued to function simultaneously as UNRWA employees and Hamas operatives".

Source:<https://govextra.gov.il/unrwa/unrwa/#:~:text=Throughout%20the%20current%20war%20and,or%20next%20to%20those%20facilities.>

11. Key Obstacles That Analysts Identify

From the think-tank and expert commentary, the reasons why mediators *cannot reliably* force full disarmament include:

- **Lack of enforcement authority or force:** Mediators (the U.S., Qatar, Turkey, Egypt) do not themselves possess the military or policing leverage inside Gaza to enforce disarmament unilaterally.
- **Absence of credible security guarantors or transitional forces:** No clear external force or multilateral peacekeeping deployment is yet empowered or trusted to police Gaza post-Hamas.
- **Hamas legitimacy and internal support:** Any coercive step may backfire politically by provoking resistance among Gazans or undermining the agreement.
- **Ambiguity in the ceasefire text:** The deal's language around disarming is often conditional, sequenced, or subject to interpretation, not absolute.
- **Precedents of noncompliance:** In prior deals involving Palestinian factions, armed groups frequently retained or reconstituted capability.

Think tanks and expert commentators believe the authors of the ceasefire intend to push Hamas toward disarmament. But simultaneously, **they do not expect complete disbandment to be forced**, or expect it to be durable. Rather, analysts expect partial compliance, tactical concessions, and persistent resistance by Hamas.

Additional Sources (selected)

- Washington Institute: "Hamas Is Not Done Fighting" (Oct 14, 2025). [The Washington Institute](#)
- ACLED: "Gaza after two years... Hamas adapts to survive" (2025). [ACLED](#)
- Brookings, CSIS, IISS analyses on ceasefire/disarmament and Gaza's "day after" (2025). [Brookings+2CSIS+2](#)
- Reuters/WaPo/WSJ reporting on disarmament demands and Hamas crackdowns (Oct 2025). [Reuters+2The Washington Post+2](#)
- Hamas 1988 Covenant and 2017 Document of General Principles (primary texts). [Avalon Project+2Intelligence Resource Program+2](#)
- U.S. Treasury OFAC actions on Hamas financing (2023–24). [U.S. Department of the Treasury+1](#)
- AP on Philadelphi Corridor/tunnel interdiction (2024). [AP News](#)