

Press Release

The Day after Operation Protective Edge – Post-ceasefire opportunities for Israel, the Palestinians and the region

40 experts and diplomats, from Israel and the international community, convened in Jerusalem to advance peace and regional stability

Once Israel and Hamas reach a ceasefire agreement, Israeli relations with the Palestinians and with the wider Arab and Muslim world may benefit from a series of regional dynamics and fresh opportunities likely to emerge after the end of the military operation in the Gaza Strip.

[Mitvim - The Israeli Institute for Regional Foreign Policies](#) and the [International Crisis Group](#) convened in Jerusalem a policy planning workshop called “Israel, Gaza and the region: Post-ceasefire opportunities” on July 24th 2014, which was attended by a unique multi-national group of 40 diplomats, think tankers, journalists and scholars.

Together, the group explored new ways to advance peace and regional stability following Operation Protective Edge and addressed key issues including: the difficulties of demilitarizing the Gaza Strip, the economic rebuilding of the Palestinian enclave, the need to move from conflict management to conflict resolution, regional and international mechanisms for future mediation and ceasefire implementation, the Palestinian unity government and the revival of the Arab Peace Initiative.

The workshop aimed to understand the issues that led to the recent flare-up and the favorable circumstances that could arise if tackled in a truce agreement.



Dr. Ehud Eiran, Board Member at the Mitvim Institute and Assistant Professor at the University of Haifa, argued that “the period following Arab-Israeli armed clashes historically created windows of opportunity for political processes between Israelis and Arabs. UNSCR 242, the peace with Egypt and the Madrid process were all born out of the ashes of conflict. When this round of violence ends we will have another, far narrower window. But we should seize it. Part of the opportunity structure would be the interim lessons drawn from this round: the limits of Israeli power, and the limits of the approach that this conflict can be managed, rather than resolved.”



Dr. Nimrod Goren, Chairman of the Mitvim Institute, claimed that “the Israeli discourse regarding the warfare in Gaza focuses on military options, and neglects post-ceasefire diplomatic opportunities. Israel should leverage the end of Operation Protective Edge to expand its regional ties and to promote peace with the Palestinians. A good starting point will be for Israel to accept the new multi-mediator setting that emerges in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Egypt is no longer capable of functioning as the sole regional middleman between Israel and Hamas, and Israel will benefit from acknowledging that other regional and multi-national actors, and not only its allies, should be part of efforts to reach a solution in Gaza.”



Ofer Zalberg, Senior Analyst at the International Crisis Group, said that “the ‘quiet for quiet paradigm’ has collapsed. The Israeli public realizes that quiet actually means that the enemy is arming itself and grows stronger. A new answer to the challenge Hamas poses is needed. More than ever those seeking a two state solution must ensure the PLO's head can represent all Palestinians in negotiations with Israel. Palestinians could be offered significant political incentives so they institutionalize a process for negotiations with Israel in which Hamas would abide also by decisions it does not approve of. Sheikh Yassin's past ruling that Hamas should abide by the Palestinian majority's decision may be key to this.”



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