

IDF Draws Up New Gaza War Doctrine

In future, military will slow down initial operations.

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Ahead of a potential new conflict with Hamas in the Gaza Strip, the IDF has drawn up plans to evacuate entire Palestinian villages and refugee camps from areas of conflict in the event of an Israeli incursion, The Jerusalem Post has learned.

During Operation Cast Lead, in the winter of 2008/2009, the IDF dropped millions of flyers over areas it planned to invade and made over a quarter of a million phone calls to private homes and mobile phones warning people to leave.

The new plans draw on some of the experiences from Cast Lead, and are also being viewed in the IDF as part of the [military's lessons from the Goldstone Report](#), which harshly criticized Israel and the way it operated within urban areas.

While the army is drawing up plans, current assessments in the military are that Hamas is not interested in instigating a new conflict with Israel.

Last month, the Post revealed that the IDF had prepared, for the first time, an operational doctrine on how forces should operate when fighting within areas populated by civilians. The new doctrine was authored by the Concepts and Doctrine Section of the IDF Ground Forces Command, and was approved by OC Ground Forces Command Maj.-Gen. Sami Turgeman earlier this month.

The Goldstone Report accused the IDF of having committed war crimes during Cast Lead. The IDF recently completed a 1,000-page document deconstructing the allegations piece by piece, and lawyers in various governmental bodies are now going over the text of the document before releasing it to the public.

According to the new operational doctrine for the Gaza Strip, ahead of an invasion of the Jabalya refugee camp in a large-scale operation, for example, the IDF would give prior notification to residents and designate an amount of time they would be given to leave. The IDF would also enter potential conflict zones more slowly to permit residents to evacuate the area.

Defense officials said that consideration of the new plans did not mean the military had operated wrongly during Cast Lead.

Hamas has also made changes to its operational plans. Overall, while it believes its defensive plans - which included roadside bombs, booby-trapped homes and dozens of kilometers of tunnels and trenches - were correct, they were not sufficiently effective during

Cast Lead, as commanders were inexperienced.

Since Cast Lead, Hamas has replaced several of its senior brigade and battalion commanders, and has clearly defined each one's specific area of responsibilities so it will be clear, as it apparently was not during Cast Lead, which commander is to operate in which area.

In a related matter, Military Advocate-General Maj.-Gen. Avichai Mandelblit held a hearing on Tuesday for a soldier from the Givati Brigade suspected of having opened fire at a group of civilians during Cast Lead and killing two women. Mandelblit held the hearing before deciding whether to press charges. IDF sources have said there was significant evidence against the soldier and that it could lead to manslaughter charges.

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