

Rabbis affiliated with the Israeli army urged troops heading into Gaza to reclaim what they said was God-given land and "get rid of the gentiles" — effectively turning the 22-day Israeli intervention into a religious war, according to the testimony of a soldier who fought in Gaza.

Literature passed out to soldiers by the army's rabbinate "had a clear message — we are the people of Israel, we came by a miracle to the land of Israel, God returned us to the land, now we need to struggle to get rid of the gentiles that are interfering with our conquest of the land," the soldier told a forum of Gaza veterans in mid-February, just weeks after the conflict ended.

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