

# Israel's lies about October 7 incursion fall apart

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Israel has used the October 7 “Al-Aqsa Flood” incursion to mount a genocidal assault on Gaza. The official narrative from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, repeated faithfully by his imperialist backers, is that Hamas carried out an unexpected and unprecedentedly barbaric assault and must now be wiped out at whatever cost.

This turns truth on its head. As the *World Socialist Web Site* has repeatedly warned, ever since his government took office at the end of 2022, Netanyahu has mounted provocation after provocation against the Palestinians aimed at inciting retaliation, as then occurred on October 7. Al-Aqsa Flood provided the casus belli for a pre-planned campaign of mass murder and ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians beginning with Gaza and then moving on to the West bank and including Israel's two million Arab citizens.

Israel's genocidal campaign has already claimed more than 14,000 lives—mostly children, women and the elderly. It has destroyed hospitals, schools and apartment blocks, while Israel's refusal to allow food, fuel, electricity and even water to enter Gaza means that many more defenceless Palestinians will die a terrible death from starvation, thirst and disease.

But Israel's entire narrative surrounding the events of October 7 has begun to collapse, with mounting evidence that Netanyahu's government and Israel's army and security services knew a military incursion was about to happen, and that once it did take place, large numbers of Israeli casualties resulted from a massive military operation carried out by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

These revelations have been largely ignored by the world's media, which has dutifully and endlessly repeated Israel's claims that Hamas fighters committed horrific atrocities—including brutal kidnappings, babies being decapitated and burned, and women being raped—which claimed 1,400 lives. The gunmen, it is said, deliberately targeted the Supernova music festival, killing hundreds of young people, and also slaughtered the residents of Kibbutzim.

Many of the Israeli families of those killed, injured or taken hostage on October 7—reflecting a widely held view that Netanyahu is responsible for the disaster and did nothing to prevent it—have called for an independent and international investigation, which the government has refused. They have demanded answers to two basic questions:

What did Israel's military-intelligence apparatus know in advance about what Hamas had planned?

And what actually happened over the weekend of October 7-8?

**What did Israel know about the planned attack?**

The official line on October 7, endlessly repeated, is that Israel's infamous Mossad spy network had no inkling that such a large-scale attack—requiring months of planning, training and coordination among several Palestinian groups, including Hamas and Islamic Jihad, as well as non-affiliated Palestinians—was in the offing.

The secret American military-intelligence base in Israel's Negev desert just 20 miles from Gaza, “Site 512,” was likewise blindsided, it is

claimed.

The authorities have not explained how Israel's massive electronic border fence could have been breached with only rudimentary tools and without any sirens going off or army bases being alerted—with the result that the Middle East's most sophisticated army took hours to arrive at the scene in a country no bigger than the US state of New Jersey.

Media commentary has largely ascribed Israel's security failure to its focus on the West Bank. The Netanyahu government has promoted settler violence against the Palestinians and ultra-orthodox provocations at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which supposedly consumed the attention of the IDF and Mossad.

Historically, far from viewing Hamas as a threat, Netanyahu has bolstered it as a counterweight to the Fatah-dominated Palestinian Authority (PA). Israel has worked to cement divisions between the two rival Palestinian factions and prevent the establishment of a mini-Palestinian state made up of the West Bank and Gaza.

As an anonymous Israeli intelligence officer told the *Washington Post* last month, “That's what happens when you forget that all defense lines can eventually be breached and have been historically. That's what happens when you underestimate your enemy.”

Netanyahu has repeatedly denied having received any military intelligence about a possible attack. On October 29, he tweeted that “under no circumstances and at no stage was Prime Minister Netanyahu warned about Hamas' intending to go to war.”

Two days ago, his lies were exposed with the publication by *Ha'aretz* of letters written in March and again in July by the head of the research division at Military Intelligence, personally warning Netanyahu that the sociopolitical crisis rocking the country was encouraging Iran, Hezbollah and Hamas to risk action against the country, even simultaneously.

In March, Brigadier General Amit Sa'ar wrote, “We are seeing deliberation on whether to sit on the fence and let Israel continue to weaken itself, or to take initiative and worsen its situation.” He attached the intelligence reports on which his warnings were based.

He added, “To our understanding, this insight is the foundation of Hamas' high motivation to execute attacks from the north at the present time, and it also spurs Iran to increase efforts by its proxies to advance attacks against Israel.”

When Defense Minister Yoav Gallant drew attention to this, Netanyahu promptly sacked him, only reinstating him following massive protests.

Sa'ar sent Netanyahu another letter in July, just before the Knesset approved legislation granting the government powers to override the Supreme Court, saying, “The worsening crisis is intensifying the erosion of Israel's image, worsening the damage to Israeli deterrence and increasing the probability of escalation.” IDF Chief of Staff Herzl Halevi tried to brief Netanyahu on the security situation but was refused an audience.

These are only the latest revelations refuting Netanyahu's claims of

ignorance of a planned attack by Hamas.

Just two days after the attack, on Monday October 9, Egypt exposed Netanyahu's protestations that he had no foreknowledge. An Egyptian intelligence official told the Associated Press that Cairo had repeatedly warned the Israeli authorities that "something big" was being planned from Gaza. He said, "We have warned them an explosion of the situation is coming, and very soon, and it would be big. But they underestimated such warnings." He added that Israeli officials had played down the threat from Gaza, instead focusing on the West Bank. Netanyahu has denied receiving any such warning, denouncing the story as "fake news."

Israel's own soldiers also reportedly raised the alarm. But they were ignored and threatened. On November 18, speaking on a *Channel 12* news programme, at least two female soldiers described how they had raised concerns for weeks beforehand about what they regarded as suspicious activity along the Gaza border. They told their commanders about "training, anomalies and preparations" near the border wall, telling *Channel 12* they had seen "new people visiting farms around the border."

Not only were their reports brushed aside, but the soldiers said they were threatened with court martial for raising concerns, "We were told that if we continue to harass on this issue, you will stand trial." An officer told them, "Hamas are just a bunch of punks, they won't do anything."

Such threats suggest that, while the full extent of Hamas's planned incursion may have been unclear, the Israeli authorities knew about a planned attack and allowed it to happen. Put more bluntly, they wanted an atrocity and so stood down their defence and rescue services. Furthermore, the Biden administration's full-throated support for Israel—including its deployment of warships to the region the very next day—indicates that October 7 was seized on by US military and intelligence officials to activate war plans prepared long in advance.

#### **What happened on October 7?**

On October 7, under cover of thousands of rockets launched as a distraction, at least 1,500 Palestinians undertook what can only be described as a desperate suicide mission, breaching the fortified Erez Crossing point and several points in the electronic fence between Gaza and Israel. Their declared intention was to destroy Israel's military division on Gaza's border and to take hostages who could be traded for the approximately 5,300 Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli prisons—some 1,500 of whom were being held under administrative detention, without charge or trial, for an indefinite period.

They attacked the military base near the Erez Crossing and several military outposts, knocking out their technical equipment and disabling their communications systems, preventing the soldiers from reporting the attacks. In the ensuing battles, Palestinian fighters killed many soldiers, taking some as hostages, before moving on to the southern towns, villages and kibbutzim and to the Supernova music festival, which just five days earlier had been extended by one day to October 7.

According to reports in the Israeli press, the IDF, "caught off guard," were slow to respond to the desperate cries for help from people caught up in the attacks, enabling Hamas fighters and the other Palestinian groups to kill around 1,400 people and take 240 hostages, including soldiers, civilians, foreign nationals and one Palestinian citizen of Israel.

It took two weeks for this story to come apart.

On October 20, *Ha'aretz* released the names and locations of 683 Israelis killed during the Palestinian insurgency, or about half of the reported 1,400 death toll. Of these, 331 were soldiers and police officers, many of them female, along with a further 13 rescue service members. (This number has since risen to 377 military and police personnel and 845 civilians, for a downwardly revised total of 1,222. The initial total included some of the dead Palestinians.) None of those listed were children under the age of three, repudiating all of the lurid and mendacious claims about the slaughter, beheading, and, in one instance, cooking in an oven of babies. Seven victims were reported as being

between 4 and 7 years old, and nine between 10 and 17.

The fact that so many (48 percent) of the incomplete list are Israeli combatants means that ferocious armed battles took place between the Israeli security forces and Palestinians. Some 1,500 Palestinians were reportedly killed, with none apparently captured alive. It took three days before the fighting stopped and the IDF regained control.

Numerous sources testify that a significant number of Israeli civilians lost their lives in the crossfire, or more likely because of the infamous Hannibal Directive formulated during Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon in 1986. The Directive aims to prevent the capture of Israelis by enemy forces, even at the cost of their lives, and implies that the IDF should kill Israelis rather than allow them to fall into the hands of Hamas.

*Ha'aretz's* military correspondent Amos Harel detailed how the massive military base and Coordination of Government Activities in the [Occupied] Territories (COGAT) facility at the Erez Crossing, which functions as the nerve centre of Israel's siege on Gaza, came under attack by Palestinian fighters. The unit's deputy commander described how he and his tank unit "fought inside the kibbutz, from house to house, with the tanks."

He concluded, "We had no choice." What he didn't say was that until recently, when they were redeployed to the West Bank, IDF soldiers were stationed at all kibbutzim.

With many of its soldiers killed or wounded, the unit's commander was "compelled to call for an aerial strike against the base itself in order to repulse the terrorists." IDF Apache helicopters were used repeatedly in the next days, killing not only Palestinian fighters, but also Israeli army personnel and civilians. The helicopter strikes explain the significant damage to buildings, with many burnt out, and the large number of burnt-out cars, as well as several burned bodies, which the government had blamed on Palestinians armed with rifles and hand grenades—weapons that are incapable of causing that level or type of damage.

*Yediot Aharonoth*, an Israeli news outlet, noted in a report on the Apache squadrons that "the pilots realized that there was tremendous difficulty in distinguishing within the occupied outposts and settlements who was a terrorist and who was a soldier or civilian... The rate of fire against the thousands of terrorists was tremendous at first, and only at a certain point did the pilots begin to slow down the attacks and carefully select the targets."

Yasmin Porat, a 44-year-old mother of three whose partner was killed, explains in a long interview with Kan public broadcaster, published on the *Electronic Intifada*, how, having fled the Supernova festival, she was captured and held hostage by Palestinian militants in Kibbutz Be'eri. She said she was well treated, rebutting Israel's claims of deliberate gross mistreatment and abuse by the Palestinian fighters, adding that the kidnappers treated her and other hostages "humanely," in the belief that they would be able to return safely to Gaza as they would be with their Israeli captives.

In the event, however, IDF soldiers fired not just on the Palestinians, but also on hostages. She said, "They eliminated everyone, including the hostages. There was very, very heavy crossfire." She added, "After insane crossfire, two tank shells were shot into the house. It's a small kibbutz house, nothing big."

Quique Kierszenbaum, reporting in the *Guardian* about his tour of Kibbutz Be'eri under the auspices of the Israeli Army's propaganda unit, writes, "Building after building has been destroyed, whether in the Hamas assault or in the fighting that followed, nearby trees splintered and walls reduced to concrete rubble from where Israeli tanks blasted the Hamas militants where they were hiding. Floors collapsed on floors. Roof beams were tangled and exposed like rib cages."

Witnesses also told journalists from the *New York Times* and the *Economist* about what took place at Kibbutz Be'eri and Kibbutz Nir Am. Essentially set up as defence posts years ago, all kibbutzim have their own

armed defence guards. While focusing on what the Palestinians had done, their accounts also described initial battles between armed Palestinians and armed Israelis during which civilians were killed and other civilians taken captive.

Videos show Palestinians in shootouts with armed Israeli security forces, with unarmed Israelis taking cover in between. Other videos show fighters shooting toward houses and throwing grenades into fortified areas. Eyewitnesses have testified that grenades were thrown into bomb shelters, although it is not known who threw them. There have been several press reports of Israelis killed by friendly fire, while several Israelis have claimed they were fired upon by Israeli military and police.

*Ha'aretz* journalist Nir Hasson reported on October 20 his interview with a local resident of Be'eri named Tuval, who was away from the kibbutz when the attack took place but whose partner was killed. He wrote, "According to him, only on Monday night and only after the commanders in the field made difficult decisions—including shelling houses with all their occupants inside in order to eliminate the terrorists along with the hostages—did the IDF complete the takeover of the kibbutz. The price was terrible: at least 112 Be'eri people were killed. Others were kidnapped. Yesterday, 11 days after the massacre, the bodies of a mother and her son were discovered in one of the destroyed houses. It is believed that more bodies are still lying in the rubble."

In the last few days, the Israeli police report into the attack on the Supernova music festival, where the largest number of deaths occurred—364 people, including 17 police officers—and where 40 people were taken hostage, found that contrary to Israeli government claims, the festival was not on Hamas's list of targets. Hamas could not have planned to attack it, as the festival organisers switched to the site in the Western Negev desert only two days before, after the original location in southern Israel fell through. Palestinian fighters only found out about it by accident after the festival was then extended by a day at short notice. Most of the 4,400 attendees managed to escape before the attack took place.

*Ha'aretz* reported that police investigators found that an IDF helicopter opened fire on the attackers, hitting some people attending the festival. ABC News had earlier reported that an Israeli tank had headed to the site of the festival, while videos appeared to show IDF forces opening fire at Palestinian fighters through a crowd of unarmed civilians.

These eyewitness testimonies drive a horse and cart through the official Israeli narrative. They show that:

- The IDF acted as brutal and trigger-happy mass murderers of both Palestinians and Israelis.
- Many Israeli captives were still alive on the Monday, two days after the events of October 7.
- Hostages were not only killed in the crossfire that took place between the IDF and Palestinian militia on the Saturday. Many were killed as a consequence of the IDF's deliberate decision to attack the kibbutz with tank shells and other heavy weaponry at close quarters in the full knowledge that hostages and their captors were there.
- The IDF, not the Palestinians, caused many of the Israeli civilian deaths that were used to justify Israel's genocidal war on Gaza and the deployment of US warships to the Middle East. How many can only be confirmed by releasing the results of autopsies that would show the type of bullets used.
- Finally, it explains why army spokesperson Daniel Hagari found that a "substantial" number of the hostages taken by Hamas are military officers.

Far from protecting Israeli civilians, the Netanyahu government and the IDF used them as cannon fodder in pursuit of a policy of Israeli expansionism and Jewish Supremacy.

Netanyahu has, in part, agreed to a temporary "operational pause" in Israel's genocidal assault on Gaza, in return for Hamas releasing 50 hostages, to try and contain mounting anger within Israel over his

responsibility for October 7. But there is no reason to believe this will work.

A political confrontation with Netanyahu and his fascist allies is coming. But this requires more than revulsion over what they did on October 7 and concern for the fate of the hostages. It is not a question, as Israel's Zionist opposition to Netanyahu put it, of handing the reins to someone who is more militarily and politically "competent" to wage mass murder and ethnic cleansing, such as defence minister Gallant.

The demand must be for an immediate end to the genocide of the Palestinians, repudiating Zionism and advocating the creation of a multinational state with full equality for its Palestinian and Jewish citizens as part of a United Socialist States of the Middle East.

The lies used to sanction the mass murder and ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians are regurgitated by Washington, London, Paris and Berlin in furtherance of their own plans to control the resource-rich Middle East as part of a global war against Iran, Russia and ultimately China. For the millions of workers and young people coming into struggle against their own rotten governments over their collusion with the Zionist butchers, this means taking up a political struggle against imperialism's drive to war and for socialism.



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