



HAMAS ATTACKS ISRAEL: ONE YEAR ON

Jeanne McKinney gives the inside story on the terrible 7 October attacks from boots on the ground

The following article is largely based on a series of one-on-one interviews with an unnamed member of the IDF community who remains anonymous due to security issues in an active war. A name has been assigned to protect this warfighter: IDF Community Member (IDFCM).

On 7 October, 2023 simultaneous waves of Hamas terrorists assaulted and massacred Israeli civilian communities and military posts. The regions included Ashkelon, Netiv HaAsara, Sderot, Kfar Aza, Nahal Oz, Be'eri, Nova Festival, Attack on Re'im Base, Nirim, Nir Oz and Ofakim. Prior to the enemy incursion at dawn, over 5,000 rockets were launched by Hamas from Gaza into Israel, which served as strategic cover to breach Israel's

Southern border. Heavily-armed Hamas militants rushed in to commit a series of unfathomable atrocities.

In the year since, Hamas has spewed out its version of action and casualties in the war zones to demonise those that were slaughtered. Of course, its propaganda does not include that Hamas started a war on the morning of 7 October, making sure it put Palestinians in harm's way. They knew Israel would respond with lethal might. These hardened regional criminals omit facts and concoct twisted narratives to bait the media. Deception blankets as Hamas drives for a pan Islamic global state for which Israel or her allies in the West have no place.

Israel just happens to be a convenient target to send a brutal message to the West and the world. The following

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article will break down what went wrong in security and response, and what is true from inside Israel.

The attacks claimed the lives of more than 1,188 individuals with 800 of the bodies confirmed as civilians. The wounded left behind totalled 4,834, and 251 were taken hostage. Some bodies remained unidentifiable due to mutilation. The IDF task to retrieve bodies (both soldiers and terrorists) began one week after the attack in back-to-back missions. "You felt dirty of death," says IDFCM, when he and his IDF unit were tasked to recover the burned, mutilated and tortured remains of their countrymen left by Hamas on 7 October. Originally, it was estimated that around 3,000 Gazans breached the fence at multiple locations along Israel's sovereign border. Now, the latest information says 6,000, equal to more than a US Army regiment. It is estimated half of the marauders were 'civilians', yet the moment they jumped on board they became terrorists.

"They are brainwashed in such a way that everybody wants to get Jewish blood on their hands," says IDFCM. This indoctrination is years long and is not eliminated over night or in one war. Hamas leaders enforce it with strict punishments from childhood on. Who would know better than Mosab Hassan Yousef, son of Hamas co-founder, Sheikh Hassan Yousef?

Son Yousef denounced his father's group at the UN in November 2023, exposing the "true face of Hamas' genocidal death cult" and "savage indoctrination of Palestinian kids". He explained his own beatings to submit while his father was in prison.

"Take my words very carefully," states son Yousef, "Hamas is committing a crime against this generation and the next generations to come, so blaming Israel is not going to solve the problem. Imagine a ten-year-old child. When I disobeyed Hamas, I was tied up to a post and I was whipped by Hamas' top leader... with an electric cable – every lash I lost my breath until I lost my consciousness... This is Hamas discipline, this is how they wanted me to be – to become a violent savage like them."

One of the Hamas terrorists called his parents in Gaza on his cell phone to gloat about an Israeli he had just murdered. It was as if there was no greater joy in this executioner's voice as he told them: "You need to be proud of me with my own hands."

The events of 7 October violently shook the Israeli ground off the Richter scale. "No terrorists are worse than the terrorists in Gaza," states IDFCM, adding: "here's why". The drive is built on a false claim that the current territory called Palestine has historical rights to Israel's land. Palestine is not a one-state, but one of 22 states in the Arab League and they have not met criteria to be official. Outsiders calling for a two-state solution do not understand the dynamics of the Jewish and Arab cultures – incompatible like oil and water.

The Hoover Institution says a two-state nation is impossible because both sides have irreconcilable national goals. Palestine (run by terrorists) refuses to recognise Jewish nationhood, and "have not shown any capability of constructing and governing a state of their own – whether a democracy or an autocracy".

Before 1948, Palestine was home to a diverse population of Arabs, Jews, and Christians, as all groups had religious ties to the area, especially Jerusalem. The land itself was under the control of various empires, such as the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines and eventually the Islamic Caliphate and the Ottoman Empire.

After four centuries of Ottoman Empire occupation, the British drove them out in World War I and were given the League of Nations mandate to administer to Palestine and Transjordan territories. The British Mandate of Palestine aimed to establish a: "national home for the Jewish people," in exchange for Jewish support for Britain's World War I effort, while also catering to the Arab majority. Yet tensions and unrest began to rise.

A request for a Jewish safe haven was made to the international powers. The only solution was to go where they once lived and be independent because of rising antisemitism around the world. They were given criteria to meet and exceeded it.

THEY SAW HOUSES AND CARS BURNED AND HUNDREDS OF BODIES IN THE STREETS

On 14 May, 1948, David Ben-Gurion, the head of the Jewish Agency, proclaimed the establishment of the State of Israel. US President Harry S Truman recognized the new nation on the same day. By the end of the year, Israel was surrounded by Arab neighbours who tried to invade and destroy the new state who exhibited impressive strength. It ended in an Arab defeat coined 'al-Nakba' (the catastrophe). Hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs either fled or were expelled from the land. Defeat by the fledgling newcomer led to years of chaos and unrest.

After 1948, Israel worked relentlessly to make the best of its exposed position while absorbing one million immigrants. Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser led a military coup to overthrow the king of Egypt. He became the architect of a pan-Arab nationalist movement to recapture Arab greatness and exact revenge on Israel. In 1967, the Six Day War changed the Middle East. Israel's IDF Forces saw that the land gifted to the Jewish people "by a miracle from God" could not be given up. Israel defeated Egypt, Jordan, and Syria and occupied the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. The Sinai Peninsula was later returned to Egypt.

"Many people think that the Jews defend the state of Israel," says Brigadier General (RES.) Amir Avivi: "as a general in Israel Defence Forces, I'm here to tell you it's the other way around, the state of Israel defends the Jews."

In 2002, Avivi led a battalion of 800 soldiers during Operation Defensive Shield. They engaged in heavy fighting in Judea and Samaria to stop a wave of Palestinian suicide bombings. After ten months, "Fighting in the trenches day and night is both physically and mentally gruelling, relates Avivi. He injected his men with national pride during a short break in fighting to teach why, "the return of the Jewish people after 2000 years of exile is unprecedented."

In this war, hate is the driver behind the weapons. "The extremist hatred towards Jews is the most accepted hatred towards any people group in the world," believes IDFCM. Those in the streets waving Palestinian flags align with terrorists. "From the river to the sea" is mistakenly said to be call for freedom. Rather it is an antisemitic slogan aligning with Hamas' call for destruction of the state of Israel. "That is their deepest desire," says IDFCM, "that from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea,

which is the whole landmass of Israel, not just Judea and Samaria, Gaza – it means all will be free of Jews.” The world as witness, they will use rape, murder, and torture to get it.

Israel supplies water, power, food, and medical supplies to Gazans. Al-Shifa Hospital complex, designed by Israeli architects, is now an underground Hamas fortress and principal headquarters. Any cement, steel, building materials that go in to help the people can be repurposed by Hamas.

ONE OF THE TERRORISTS CALLED HIS PARENTS TO GLOAT ABOUT AN ISRAELI HE HAD JUST MURDERED

According to IDFCM, they knew something was up, but nobody knew the scale or the intent of the enemy. Everybody was caught by surprise. What IDFCM understood is that the intelligence information was not being shared or cross-referenced by the different agencies, including Aman (military), Shin Bet (internal and security) and Mossad (intelligence). Intelligence remained in very few hands and decision makers (certain generals) were unable to determine response readiness because of delayed intelligence.

An uncovering of dirty political stuff revealed some trying to knock Prime Minister Netanyahu out of his position. The IDF Chief of Staff together with other political rivals and the Supreme Court slowed and weakened the response on 7th October, relates IDFCM.

When the Supreme Court cannot declare that Israel is in “a state of emergency or state of war,” generals cannot give the green light for units to recruit and deploy to the war zone. That was the stand down issue. Netanyahu declared a state of emergency and war around noon. A majority of the cabinet members did not convene until 8:00PM, causing the Supreme Court to push back on a green light prior to the convening for “a full response”.

Those delays unfolded badly on the battlefield. A lot of units that could have engaged Hamas were held back, and the units that showed up and did engage were relegated to chaos. It was not clear what to do, due to either poor leadership on the ground or soldiers not getting directives in a “half-response”. Top Tier One units basically showed up, needing less bureaucracy to deploy to the

threat. They were smaller in size, like a quick reaction force, and were overwhelmed with huge terrorist numbers they encountered. That left the other Special Forces (not Tier One), of which IDFCM was a part, sitting on the sidelines for hours, frustrated because they are used to being the guys on the front lines. The green light for a full response came down around 8:00PM.

There had never been such a high number of casualties for the Tier One community in one day.

Special Forces’ death count from 7th October includes 26 from the Commando Battalion, 11 from Maglan, seven from Egoz and nine from Duvdivan.

Special [AIR] Forces unit Shaldag has rarely taken casualties throughout its history. It is Israel’s equivalent to Britain’s SAS. Seven fell from Shaldag and eight from Matkal, Israel’s top secret intelligence unit. Nine from Yamam, Israel’s top hostage rescue unit. The tragic loss of human lives in these military units are irreplaceable and irreconcilable.

Matt ‘Willy’ Williams OAM, an independent reporter, offers this exclusive “First on the Ground” interview of a member of Israel’s Elite Special Forces counterterror unit who went to Sderot. His SF unit’s name and location as well as the special operator’s identity is hidden by a mask. It states that: “We got there about nine o’ clock in the morning to meet what we thought was an IDF roadblock, but it was terrorists wearing their uniforms. The terrorists started shooting while they were driving, so the Elite special forces got out of the car to fire back and killed them all. They drove to the police station in Sderot and found the terrorists had taken all the police hostages. The difficult fight to rescue all the police officers lasted 25 hours. At that point they understood this was more than just a group of terrorists... It was a very bad day. The horrible things we saw, you cannot stand it.”

The day began with him seeing a baby who had been placed in an oven on high heat while his parents were forced to watch, then were shot to death by Hamas. Once they entered Sderot City, terrorists came from all directions, and the elite forces had to kill them. They saw houses and cars burned and hundreds of bodies in the streets. “Then we understood it’s a different war, a different type of game and we had to understand how we had to deal with that”.

His account is both riveting and heartbreaking, but a must see to understand what Israel’s fighting forces faced on that dreadful day. The war is far from over... ●

Part II of this feature appears in next month’s issue



JEANNE MCKINNEY IS AN award-winning military journalist, book author, and documentary filmmaker. She recently published the true historical account of *Triumph Over the Taliban: The Untold Story of US Marines’ Courageous Fight to Save Camp Bastion* (now on Amazon). McKinney also wrote, directed, and is currently producing a limited documentary series called *Ronin 3: The Battle for Sangin* - that follows 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines through a labyrinth of murder holes and IEDs in a heavily entrenched Taliban stronghold in 2010, on mission to restore security to the local Afghan people.

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