

Israeli Army Ordered Mass “Hannibal Directive” on 7 October: Media

An investigation from Israel's leading newspaper indicates Israel deliberately killed many of its own civilians and soldiers during Hamas' Operation Al-Aqsa Flood to prevent them being taken captive back to Gaza

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The Israeli military implemented the “Hannibal Directive” during Hamas’ attack on 7 October, killing some of its own civilians and soldiers to prevent Hamas from taking them as captives back to Gaza, according to an investigation by Israel’s leading newspaper, Yedioth Ahronoth, which will be published in full on 12 January.

The Hebrew edition of the paper [wrote](#) on 11 January that

“one of the revelations revealed in the investigation is that at noon on October 7, the IDF [Israeli army] ordered all of its combat units in practice to use the ‘Hannibal Procedure’ although without clearly mentioning this explicitly by name.”

The order was to stop “at all costs any attempt by Hamas terrorists to return to Gaza, that is, despite the fear that some of them have abductees,” the paper wrote.

The *Times of Israel* [described](#) how the Hannibal procedure, or directive, “allows soldiers to use potentially massive amounts of force to prevent a soldier from falling into the hands of the enemy. This includes the possibility of endangering the life of the soldier in question in order to prevent his capture.”

A previous *Haaretz* [investigation](#) of the directive concluded that

“from the point of view of the army, a dead soldier is better than a captive soldier who

himself suffers and forces the state to release thousands of captives in order to obtain his release.”

During the 7 October attack, Hamas and other Palestinians successfully took some 240 Israeli soldiers and civilians from the settlements (also known as kibbutzim) and military bases back to Gaza as captives.

Hamas hoped to exchange them for the thousands of Palestinians, including women and children, held in Israeli prisons.

Hamas used the Toyota pick-up trucks and motorcycles with which they entered Israel, as well as cars stolen from the settlements, to take Israeli captives back to Gaza. Some were also taken to Gaza on foot and even in carts pulled by tractors by other Palestinians who crossed into Israel after the Hamas fighters breached the border fence.

According to *Yediot Ahronoth*, about a thousand “terrorists and infiltrators” were killed in the area between the settlements and the Gaza Strip.

But the paper added it is not clear at this time how many of the Israeli abductees were killed due to the activation of the Hannibal directive:

“In the week after the attack, soldiers of elite units checked about 70 vehicles that were left in the area between the settlements and the Gaza Strip. These are vehicles that did not reach Gaza, because on the way they were shot by a combat helicopter, an anti-tank missile or a tank, and at least in some cases everyone in the vehicle was killed.”

As journalist Dan Cohen [reported](#), the Israeli military killed Efrat Katz, age 68, as she was being taken from Kibbutz Nir Oz to Gaza on a cart pulled by a tractor on 7 October. Her daughter, Doron Katz-Asher, and two granddaughters, Raz, age 2, and Aviv, age 4, were also in the cart.

Doron Katz-Asher later told Israel’s *Channel 12* that the Israeli army opened fire on the tractor, injuring her two daughters and killing her mother, Efrat.

As previously [reported](#) by *The Cradle*, Israeli Air Force (reserve) Col. Nof Erez described Israel’s actions on 7 October as a “mass Hannibal” event in response to the use of Apache helicopters and tanks.

“What we saw here was a mass Hannibal. There were many openings in the fence, thousands of people in many different vehicles with hostages and without,” he told *Haaretz*.

The revelation that the Israeli military informally issued the Hannibal Directive raises questions about the deaths of many Israeli civilians who were initially presumed taken captive by Hamas on 7 October but whose bodies were later discovered near the Gaza border fence.

For example, 80-year-old Carmela Dan and her 12-year-old autistic granddaughter Noya both vanished on the morning of 7 October. The family assumed both were taken captive by Hamas. But two weeks later, Israeli authorities announced their bodies “were found near the border fence,” *Foreign Policy* [reported](#).

On 19 October, Carmela's niece [told](#) *NBC News*,

"There was an operation by the Israeli army some days ago at this point to retrieve bodies, and we believe that it took them time to run what we know to be three DNA tests and to identify that it was both of them."

In another widely reported case, an Israeli brigadier general, Barak Hiram, [acknowledged](#) to the *New York Times* that he gave an order on 7 October for a tank commander to open fire on a home in Kibbutz Be'eri to kill Hamas fighters, even though 14 Israeli captives were barricaded inside the home as well.

At roughly sundown, Hiram told the tank commander:

"The negotiations are over. Break in, even at the cost of civilian casualties."

The Hamas fighters and all but one of the captives were killed, including 12-year-old twins Liel and Yanai Hetzroni. Their bodies were so severely damaged and burned that it took weeks to identify them.

In an [interview](#) with *Channel 12* on 26 October, before Hiram had publicly acknowledged giving the order to fire on the home in Be'eri, the general alluded to his logic on 7 October. He stated,

"I am very afraid that if we return to Sorana [Israeli military headquarters in Tel Aviv] and try to hold all kinds of negotiations, we may fall into a trap that will tie our hands and not allow us to do what is required, which is to go in, manipulate, and kill them [Hamas] ..."

In another case in Be'eri, an elderly couple, Mati and Amir Weiss, were allegedly killed by Hamas fighters who entered their home on the morning of 7 October. Mati sent a message to their son Yuval that the fighters had entered the house and that Amir had been shot.

Yuval, who was a member of the kibbutz security team, provided their location to commanders in the army, telling them Hamas fighters were inside the home.

To explain the elderly couple's death, *Haaretz* [writes](#), "Mati and Amir Weiss were attacked by terrorists who blew up one of the walls of their safe room and shot them."

But the picture of the Weiss home published by *Haaretz* shows a massive hole in the wall of the home and significant damage to the roof, suggesting a tank shell or helicopter strike had hit it.

The Hannibal Directive was also evident on 7 October at the Nova music festival, where Hamas allegedly massacred 364 Israeli partygoers.

Though Israeli army ground units did not respond to the Hamas attack on 7 October for many hours, the Southern District Commander of the Israeli Police, Maj. Gen. Amir Cohen [gave](#) the order, code-named "Philistine Horseman," at 6:42 am to dispatch Border Police units to various sites to confront the Hamas attack.

These units included elite counter-terror units, known as Yamam, who were [dispatched](#) by helicopter, according to Israeli officials speaking with the *New York Times*.

These units apparently opened fire on partygoers as Hamas was taking people captive.

Germany's *Bild* [reported](#) the testimony of Maya P., who survived the festival. *Bild* writes, "The terrorists who set up the road blockades came disguised as police officers and soldiers."

"People ran into them hoping to be rescued, and then they were executed," Maya said, crying.

Another survivor, Yuval Tahupi, [stated](#) to CNN, "A police lady told us most of the terrorists are dressing like soldiers, as cops, as security guards, so don't trust anyone."

Both Maya and Yuval could not imagine that Israeli forces had fired on them, so they assumed Hamas fighters must have been disguised as soldiers and police.

Israeli attack helicopters also were deployed to the Nova site, opening fire on partygoers as well.

Haaretz [reported](#) that

"According to a police source, an investigation into the incident also revealed that an IDF combat helicopter that arrived at the scene from the Ramat David base fired at the terrorists and apparently also hit some of the revelers who were there."

The BBC documented an apparent instance of the Hannibal Directive by helicopter fire. The British state broadcaster [writes](#) that car dash cam footage its journalists reviewed shows "a group of men appear. Only one is armed – they appear to be there to loot ... Two people, a man and a woman, who were hiding in a car are discovered and led away."

"The woman who was taken suddenly reappears two minutes later. She jumps and waves her arms in the air. She must think help is at hand – by this time, the Israeli Defence Forces had began [sic] their efforts to repel the incursion. But seconds later, she slumps to the floor as bullets bounce around her. We don't know if she survived."

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