



Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on October 11, 2023

Israeli Lawmaker Blames Netanyahu Government for Weekend Attacks

Israeli lawmaker Ofer Cassif, a member of the Knesset and the left-wing Hadash coalition, revealed to news outlet Al Jazeera that his party had warned about events like last weekend's Hamas assault on Israel if the Israeli government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu persisted in its occupation of Palestinian lands.

In the early hours of Saturday, Hamas conducted a multifaceted assault on Israel, firing thousands of rockets and sending fighters to Israeli towns and settlements.

The surprise assault resulted in hundreds of Israeli dead, including many soldiers, with bodies littered on roads. Hundreds of Palestinians have been killed in response, with thousands of others injured as a result of Israeli bombardments of the blockaded Gaza enclave.

Cassif said he cautioned the situation would "erupt" if the Netanyahu government retained its existing policies toward Palestinians. His party, Hadash, has four seats in the 120-member Knesset, Israel's unicameral legislature.

"We condemn and oppose any assault on innocent civilians. But in contrast to the Israeli government that means that we oppose any assault on Palestinian civilians as well. We must analyze those terrible incidents [the attacks] in the right context — and that is the ongoing occupation," Cassif declared.

"We have been warning time and time again ... everything is going to erupt and everybody is going to pay a price - mainly innocent civilians on both sides. And unfortunately, that is exactly what happened," Cassif admitted.

"The Israeli government, which is a fascist government, supports, encourages, and leads pogroms against the Palestinians. There is an ethnic cleansing going on. It was obvious the writing was on the wall, written in the blood of the Palestinians — and unfortunately now Israelis as well," he elaborated.

Over 20,000 Palestinians have fled Gaza's border region toward the interior of the Hamas-dominated territory to seek shelter in UN schools, based on statements from UNRWA, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees.

"The only thing Netanyahu cares about is not the well-being of the citizens of Israel, let alone of Palestinians in the occupied territories," Cassif asserted.

"He is interested in surviving. He just wants to stay out of prison. That is the only motivation and incentive that drives [him]."



AP Images
Benjamin Netanyahu



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Netanyahu has been embroiled in various [legal troubles](#), with Israel's attorney general filing several charges against him, including corruption and breach of trust. He has strongly disavowed such allegations against him.

On October 8, Hezbollah, an Iran-backed Shia armed political group that was formed in 1982 to fight Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon, declared that it had launched guided rockets and artillery onto three posts in Shebaa Farms "in solidarity" with the Palestinian people.

Shebaa Farms, which is claimed by Lebanon, was seized by Israel in the 1967 Six Day War.

The Israeli military acknowledged on October 8 that it had fired artillery into an area of Lebanon from where cross-border mortar fire was launched. Israel's military disclosed that one of its drones hit a Hezbollah target in the area of Har Dov, an area in Shebaa Farms.

"I'm afraid that some of the elements like Hezbollah are going to join this war. I hope not, of course. Indeed, for the sake of all people, of all civilians, Palestinians and Israelis alike, I hope that this is going to end as soon as possible," Cassif declared, adding that "the only way to stop the bloodshed of both peoples is to put an end to the occupation."

Revealing to Al Jazeera about his fears regarding the recent Hamas attack and subsequent Israeli retaliation, Gaza resident Amer Ashour stated, "What I feared most when the escalation began was that my wife was about to give birth. I was worried how we would get to the hospital in light of the continuous bombing. But I did not at all expect my house to be bombed and destroyed."

"Today, all of us, our children and women, are homeless," Ashour continued. "Where will we go in these difficult times?"

Similarly, fellow Gaza resident Youssef Al-Bawab, who lived opposite the Al-Watan Tower, told Al Jazeera he received a warning from Israeli forces at 5:00 p.m. local time (14:00 GMT) to evacuate their house.

"We felt very frightened. The tower is only a few meters away from us and it is a civilian tower. We did not notice any resistance activities in it as Israel claimed," Al-Bawab said.

"Israel says it is targeting resistance fighters, military sites and buildings belonging to Hamas, but the truth is otherwise. I believe Israel is deliberately targeting civilians and displacing them to put more pressure on Hamas," Al-Bawab said. "But what is our fault? Where do we go?"

Israeli TV channels [said](#) the death toll from the Hamas attack has surged to 900 Israelis, with at least 2,600 wounded and several taken captive. Gaza's Health Ministry on October 10 revealed that at least 770 Palestinians had been killed and 4,100 injured in retaliatory Israeli air strikes.

On October 10, Israel proclaimed that it had re-asserted control over the Gaza border and was installing mines where Hamas militants had destroyed the barrier during their weekend attack. Furthermore, the Israeli military also called up an unprecedented 300,000 reservists and enforced a blockade on the Gaza Strip, as per Reuters reports.

Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen asserted that more than 100 people had been taken captive by Hamas. In turn, Hamas spokesperson Abu Ubaida said that the group would kill an Israeli captive for every Israeli bombing of a civilian house without warning, and broadcast such killings.

A senior Hamas official, Ali Barakeh, revealed to news agency AP on October 9 that the weekend attack had been planned for over a year, and only a small number of top commanders inside Gaza were in the



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know about it. Barakeh dismissed reports that Iranian security officials helped plot the assault, but admitted that Iran and Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group had previously aided Hamas.

Erstwhile clashes between Israel and Hamas led to widespread ruin in Gaza and days of rocket attacks on Israeli towns. The present escalation in hostilities seems to be even more perilous than past clashes, raising the prospect of a wider regional conflict.

For one, Netanyahu's government is struggling with Hamas' security breach of Israeli defense networks. On their end, ordinary Palestinians have had to deal with Israel's ongoing occupation in the West Bank and its complete encirclement of Gaza.

Hezbollah, which effectively controls southern Lebanon, declared on October 7 that it was in "direct contact" with leaders of Palestinian "resistance" groups and announced that it regarded Palestinian attacks on Israel as a "decisive response to Israel's continued occupation and a message to those seeking normalization with Israel."



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