

Israel Admits It Killed Its Own at Nova Music Festival

A police investigation shows Israeli Apache helicopters opened fire on attendees of the Nova music festival during the 7 October Hamas attack

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An Israeli police investigation into the Hamas attack on the Nova music festival near the Gaza border on 7 October revealed that an Israeli attack helicopter killed some of the attendees, Haaretz [reported](#) on 18 November.

According to a police source, an investigation into the incident showed that an Israeli combat helicopter that arrived at the scene from the Ramat David base fired at Hamas fighters and other Palestinians who crossed through the border fence from Gaza into Israel, but also fired on some of the Israelis attending the music festival. According to the police, 364 people were killed there.

The Israeli military and rescue services previously claimed that 260 Israelis were killed at the festival, all by Hamas and Palestinians in a deliberate massacre. But this is the first acknowledgement that Israeli forces killed some of their own.

Previous reports in Israeli media [revealed](#) that Israeli forces killed Israeli civilians in Be'eri, a settlement also near the Gaza border. In that case, Hamas fighters were holding Israelis captive in homes. When the Israeli military arrived, it opened fire, including by firing tank shells, killing both Israeli captives and Hamas fighters.

Three of those killed in Be'eri by Israeli tank fire were 12-year-old Liel Hezroni, her brother Yanai, and their aunt Ayla. Israeli broadcaster *Kan* [reported](#) that Liel's relatives held a farewell ceremony for her, rather than a burial ceremony, because her body could not be recovered from the house that collapsed on her and other Hamas captives after an Israeli tank fired two shells into it.

הסיפור של ליאל חצרוני ז"ל ואירוע בני הערובה בבארי:
מאיפה מתחילים את הסיפור המורכב הזה? אפשר להתחיל אותו בסוף: בשעה זו נערך טקס פרידה לליאל חצרוני, שנרצחה בבארי ב-7 באוקטובר. זו לא קבורה כי אין גופה. המשפחה החליטה על הטקס, כי עד עכשיו לא הודיע אף גורם רשמי למשפחה מה קרה לה לליאל <
pic.twitter.com/7GLEUpPXjH

— kereneubach (@kereneubach) [November 15, 2023](#)

A similar instance occurred in Sderot, where Hamas fighters had [taken](#) over the local police station, and were holding Israeli police captive inside. Both the Hamas fighters and Israeli police were killed when the Israeli army [fired](#) tank shells at the police station, killing everyone. Israeli forces then bulldozed the station.

It is therefore unclear how many of the Israelis who died on 7 October were killed by Hamas, whose fighters were seeking to take as many Israelis, both soldiers and civilians, captive back to Gaza as possible, and how many were killed by Israeli forces refusing to negotiate for the captives' release.

Israel initially claimed Hamas and Palestinians killed 1,400 Israelis on 7 October, including soldiers, police, and civilians, but later revised the count to 1,200. Israeli spokesperson **Mark Regev** acknowledged that 200 of the alleged victims were Hamas fighters or Palestinians whose bodies were burned so badly that Israeli authorities could not initially identify them and assumed them to be Israelis.

In an interview with MSNBC on 17 November, he [stated](#),

“We originally said, in the atrocious Hamas attack upon our people on October 7th, we had the number at 1,400 casualties and now we’ve revised that down to 1,200 because we understood that we’d overestimated, we made a mistake. There were actually bodies that were so badly burnt we thought they were ours, in the end apparently they were Hamas terrorists.”

Regarding the Nova festival, *Haaretz* reported as well that,

“There is a growing assessment in the security establishment that the terrorists who carried out the massacre on October 7 did not know in advance about the Nova festival held near Kibbutz Re'im, and decided to come to the place after discovering that a mass event was taking place there.”

The Hamas fighters had initially intended to attack nearby settlements in what is known as the Gaza envelope.

According to *Haaretz*, senior security officials estimate that Hamas found out about the existence of the party using drones, and directed its fighters to the location using their communication system. In a video from a body camera of one Hamas fighter, “he is heard asking a captured Israeli for directions to reach the bad guys, even though he was in a different area.” One of the findings that strengthens the assessment, according to the police and other security officials, is that the first Hamas fighters arrived at the Nova festival from the direction of road 232 and not from the direction of the Gaza border fence.

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Featured image: Burnt cars are abandoned in a carpark near where a music festival was held before an attack by Hamas gunmen from Gaza, in southern Israel, October 10. (Photo credit: REUTERS/Ronen Zvulun)

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