

Palestinian Resistance in Gaza Launches Unprecedented Surprise Attack on Israel

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In the early morning hours of Saturday, October 7, the Palestinian resistance in the besieged Gaza Strip launched an unprecedented surprise multi-prong attack on Israel, including firing a barrage of rockets toward Israeli territory while simultaneously carrying out a ground offensive into nearby Israeli towns which breached the Israeli Gaza barrier and overwhelmed surrounding Israeli military posts.

As of 12:30 local time, it was reported that thousands of rockets had been fired from Gaza into Israel and that Israeli air forces had targeted multiple areas across the Gaza Strip with airstrikes. Medical authorities in Gaza report that over 190 Palestinians had been killed and over 1,600 were injured so far. Israeli emergency services report at least 100 Israeli casualties, and dozens of other unconfirmed reports indicate the casualties to be much higher. According to *Al Jazeera*, 57 Israelis, including military personnel, have allegedly been captured and taken into Gaza.

While Hamas reported firing more than 5,000 rockets into Israel, including long-range rockets, the Israeli army claimed just over 2,200 rockets were fired into Israel Saturday morning.

At 11:47 a.m. local time, Israeli **Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu** [announced](#) that Israel was "at war," vowing that "the enemy" would pay a price "like they have never known before."

The Israeli army confirmed that Palestinian fighters had successfully breached the Gaza barrier in "several places," and that dozens of fighters had infiltrated into Israeli territory by land, air (unconfirmed videos showed alleged Palestinian fighters descending into an Israeli town via hang glider), and by sea, Israeli media reported.

The operation began at around 6:30 a.m. local time as Palestinians in Gaza woke up to the

sound of rocket fire leaving the strip toward Israel. As the sound of rocket fire rang across the strip, many Gazans flooded into the streets and took to social media, unaware of what was happening.

Close to one hour after the rocket fire began, shocking photos and videos began circulating on social media, showing convoys of armed Palestinian fighters breaking through the Israeli barrier along the Gaza border and infiltrating Israeli towns and military bases in the areas close to the strip.

Unprecedented videos showed Palestinian militants patrolling Israeli towns in armored cars and vehicles, while other videos showed the fighters seemingly casually strolling around the neighborhoods as Israeli police and security forces were yet to respond.

According to Israeli media, Israelis in southern towns surrounding Gaza were calling into Army radio and Israeli television channels, saying that fighters had been roaming around their towns and entering buildings for more than two hours while residents were still awaiting a response from Israeli forces.

At 7:50 a.m., the general commander of the Hamas military wing, **Muhammed al-Deif**, released a recorded statement declaring a “comprehensive war” across occupied Palestine.

“We announce the starting of the Operation of the ‘Flood of al-Aqsa.’ We also announce that the first attack that targeted the enemy’s locations and military fortifications and airports during the first 20 minutes exceeded 5,000 rockets and shells,” the statement said.

Al-Deif’s statement said the operation was a response to Israel’s treatment of Palestinian prisoners and the continued attacks and violations at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, which have seen an increase in recent days as large numbers of Israeli settlers raided the compound during the Jewish holiday season.

“The occupation forces invade our towns in the West Bank every day, they storm people’s homes while they’re safe, they kill, wound, demolish, and detain Palestinians. Hundreds of Palestinians were killed and injured this year. At the same time, the occupation replaced our people and took their land by force to build settlements,” al-Deif said, adding that “the criminal Israeli siege is ongoing in Gaza.”

“Amid all the Israeli crimes and violations, and their violation of international laws, with the full support of the US and the Western countries accompanied by international silence, we have decided to put a halt to this state of affairs. The enemy must understand that the time of carrying out violations with impunity is over,” the statement said.

Shortly before 11 a.m. local time, the Israeli military announced it was launching Operation Iron Swords on Gaza. Within minutes, Israeli airstrikes began striking targets across the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian Ministry of Health reported at least one Palestinian was killed and several others were wounded when an Israeli airstrike hit the Indonesian Hospital in the northern Gaza Strip.

Anadolu Agency also reported that four Palestinians were killed and several others were injured during ongoing armed confrontations between Palestinians and Israeli forces along

the Gaza border.



PALESTINIANS BREAKING DOWN THE BORDER FENCE WITH ISRAEL FROM KHAN YUNIS IN THE SOUTHERN GAZA STRIP ON OCTOBER 7, 2023. (PHOTO: STRINGER/APA IMAGES)

Unprecedented Attack & Casualties

Saturday's operation, which is being led by Hamas, but seemingly being joined by various militant factions across the Gaza Strip, was unprecedented on many fronts. It is already being considered one of the worst Israeli security and intelligence failures in recent history due to the fact that the operation largely caught Israel off guard.

Saturday morning marked the first time since Israel placed Gaza under blockade more than 16 years ago that Gaza resistance fighters were able to break through the Israeli barrier fence along the border and enter Israeli territory on foot in large numbers.

Videos surfaced on social media, posted by both Israeli and Palestinian accounts, showing masked and armed Palestinian fighters arriving in Sderot and other Israeli towns bordering Gaza in trucks equipped with large caliber guns.

Other videos showed Palestinians in large numbers, both in vehicles and on motorbikes, breaking through openings in the Gaza border fence. While it remained unclear how the initial break happened or where it took place, as the morning continued, footage showed Palestinian bulldozers breaking down parts of the fence as seemingly ordinary Palestinians crossed into the other side.

Professional video footage released by Hamas in Gaza showed its fighters taking off from Gaza using power-motorized paragliders and flying into Israeli territory. Other videos

released by Hamas showed its forces dropping explosives onto an Israeli “Merkava” tank along the Gaza border. Photos and videos published later in the morning showed Palestinians celebrating as they stood on top of a captured Israeli military tank. It was reported that several tanks were captured, along with the soldiers inside.

<https://mondoweiss.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/798428915256179920-1.mp4>

VIDEO RELEASED OF HAMAS SHOWING THE DETONATION OF AN ISRAELI TANK OUTSIDE THE GAZA STRIP, OCTOBER 7, 2023. (VIDEO: SOCIAL MEDIA)

Israeli news channels reported that Palestinian fighters reached 21 different sites inside Israel and reported several Israeli deaths and hundreds of injuries. “People in Be’eri, Kfar Aza, and Holit reported that Hamas fighters are walking inside the towns attacking Israelis,” Israeli Channel 13 reported.

Inside Israeli towns and military bases that were infiltrated by Palestinian fighters, graphic footage emerged of uniformed soldiers and Israelis lying on the ground dead. Other footage showed Palestinian fighters entering into the homes of Israelis, asking to see people’s ID’s, seemingly in search of armed forces.

While official Israeli sources were yet to confirm how many Israelis had been captured, videos coming out of Gaza purported to show a significant number of Israelis, both dead and alive, that had been captured and taken into Gaza. Several Israeli media sources have reported that Palestinian fighters captured over 35 Israelis and took them to Gaza, but Hamas has not yet confirmed as of the time of writing.

In Khan Younis, south of Gaza, fighters proudly show some Israeli soldiers who have been captured and brought to Gaza with their military uniforms. Israel’s Ynet news reported that all the Israeli defense lines had been broken and that the Israeli army was still trying to regain control over the situation.

The Israeli military response came several hours after the surprise attack of the resistance, as Israeli air forces launched airstrikes in the Gaza Strip at approximately 10:57 a.m., targeting a hospital in the north of Gaza and killing one of its staff. Other airstrikes were reported in several locations across the strip.

20 people have been killed by Israeli airstrikes in Gaza so far, including a journalist, while over 105 were injured.

While the surprise attack is being called a declaration of war, there were no signs in the days leading up to it that a military conflict would start. People in Gaza flooded the streets as news streamed in of the resistance attack, while families preparing for school kept their children at home.



PALESTINIANS CROSSING THE BORDER FENCE INTO ISRAEL FROM KHAN YUNIS IN THE SOUTHERN GAZA STRIP ON OCTOBER 7, 2023. (PHOTO BY STRINGER/APA IMAGES)

Calls for a Comprehensive War

As the morning unfolded, videos showed dozens of fighters on motorcycles and vehicles crossing Gaza's eastern borders beyond the Israeli fence.

On the ground, people in Gaza are celebrating the surprise attack while talk has begun to speak of liberation. Other analysts on local news stations are asserting that this attack has dealt a serious blow to the Israeli military and security apparatus, which will lead to a massive Israeli response.

The general commander of the Hamas military wing has called for a comprehensive war against Israel, not only from Palestine but from all the regional resistance, including Lebanon, Iran, and Yemen.

"Today, the anger of al-Aqsa, the anger of the people, and the anger of all free peoples in the world, will explode. This is our day to make the enemy understand that its time is done."

In his statement, Al-Deif also called for Palestinians in the West Bank to fight the Israelis and attack the Israeli settlements on Palestinian land while asserting elderly people and children should not be harmed in accordance with God's will.

"Today is your day to sweep the occupier and his settlements from all of our lands in the West Bank," al-Deif said in his statement. "Organize your attacks on the settlements with all the possible tools at your disposal...today, for anyone who has a gun, it is now time to use it. Those who do not have guns, use knives, cleavers, axes, Molotovs. Use your cars, trucks, or bulldozers."

“Today, the purest and honorable page of history is being written,” the statement continued. “Put down your names and families’ names on the page of glory. Those who can’t actually join the field can join by protesting and showing support.”



PALESTINIANS AFTER CROSSING THE BORDER FENCE WITH ISRAEL FROM KHAN YUNIS IN THE SOUTHERN GAZA STRIP ON OCTOBER 7, 2023. (PHOTO: STRINGER/APA IMAGES)

“It’s liberation day”

After hearing the speech made by the General Commander of the Hamas military wing, and seeing the unprecedented attacks inside occupied Palestine in Israeli towns bordering Gaza, people in Gaza crowded near the Israeli fence. Palestinian bulldozers demolished it. People in the streets gathered outside their homes, and talk of liberation and that people would be able to return to their lands began to spread like wildfire.

Dozens held their weapons and went to the border to enter occupied Palestine. The Palestinian factions in Gaza all issued statements declaring their full participation in the operation, urging people to join the battle for liberation.

Mahmoud Hussam, 23, was standing among the crowds in Al-Mansura Street east of Gaza, where a group of people were riding an Israeli vehicle they seized from the eastern borders.

“This is the first time we have done something like this from Gaza,” he told *Mondoweiss*. “It’s liberation day, and all Palestinians should join in such glorious times. Israel must understand that they can’t in any way break the Palestinians.”

Hamas military spokesperson **Abu Obidah** said in a statement that the operation was still ongoing as planned and called on Palestinians in the West Bank to move immediately on the Israeli settlements.

“The enemy will be stunned when they see their losses and wake up from their shock and realize their failure,” he said.

This is a developing story.

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Featured image: PALESTINIAN MEMBERS OF THE EZZ AL-DIN AL QASSAM BRIGADES, THE MILITARY WING OF HAMAS BURN MILITARY ARMORED VEHICLE BELONGING TO ISRAELI FORCES NEAR GAZA STRIP, GAZA ON OCTOBER 07, 2023. PHOTO BY STR APAIMAGES

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