

**Israel-Hamas war**

## Israeli intelligence 'dismissed' detailed warning of Hamas raid

Report sent to senior officer weeks before October 7 attack was ignored, say people familiar with matter



A detailed report from lower-ranking Israeli soldiers warned officers of a deadly attack by Hamas similar to that carried out by the group on October 7, which killed more than 1,200 people © Reuters

**Mehul Srivastava** in Tel Aviv YESTERDAY

A senior Israeli military intelligence officer dismissed a detailed warning predicting Hamas's raid of October 7, calling it an "imaginary scenario", said two people familiar with the discussions.

Sentries on Israel's border with Gaza, many of them female soldiers who watch and analyse a constant feed of video and other data gathered near the electronic fence surrounding the enclave, sent a detailed report weeks [before the attack](#) to the highest-ranking intelligence officer in the southern command, both people said.

The report was sent using a secure communications system and contained specific warnings, including that Hamas was training to blow up border posts at several locations, enter Israeli territory and take over *kibbutzim*, the person with direct knowledge of the contents of the warning said.

Israel's failure to prevent the attack, which the government says killed more than 1,200 people, is now seen as [its largest intelligence failure](#) since Egypt and Syria launched a surprise assault in 1973 on Yom Kippur, Judaism's holiest day.

The lower-ranking soldiers also warned their analysis of several videos showed Hamas was rehearsing taking hostages, and that they felt an attack was imminent, the

person said. The memo was triggered by the sighting of a high-ranking Hamas military commander overseeing the training, who was identified by the sentries against a database of faces and identities maintained by Unit 8200, a part of the Israeli intelligence corps.

“This is an imaginary scenario,” the high-ranking intelligence officer replied, according to a description of the communications shared with the Financial Times.

No action was taken, the person said. KAN, Israel’s public broadcaster, [reported late on Thursday](#) details of a similar warning sent by low-ranking soldiers to their seniors. KAN added that the warning included the possibility of an aircraft being downed, and of Hamas raising its flags over Israeli territory.

A second person familiar with the issue said the failure to take the report seriously had become an issue of discussion, verging on disciplinary action, within the intelligence community. This person had been told a similar description of the communications.

In response to a query from the FT, the Israel Defense Forces said its “commanders and soldiers were exclusively focused strictly” on their mission to defeat Hamas.

“Following the war, a thorough investigation will be conducted to clarify all details,” the IDF said.

The two people familiar with the communications told the FT that discussions within the intelligence community about the failure to act on the memo echoed those after the intelligence failures preceding the 1973 war.

Both said the warnings were dismissed not just because they came from lower-ranking soldiers, but because they ran up against the Israeli government’s confidence that it had contained Hamas through a punishing blockade, by bombing its military capabilities, and using aid and money as a mean to placate the Palestinian militant group.

An attack of that nature by Hamas would immediately trigger war with the Jewish state, which the Israeli intelligence community was convinced the militant group was seeking to avoid.

Hamas’s attack on October 7 largely followed the pattern predicted by the memo, including two specific kibbutzim that were attacked, and the use of rockets to distract the Israeli army from the ongoing intrusion.

Several female soldiers were killed in the attack and an unknown number abducted from their bases.

Israel's subsequent aerial bombardment and [invasion of Gaza](#) has killed at least 13,000 people, many of them women and children, according to Palestinian health officials, reduced much of the blockaded enclave to rubble, and pushed nearly the entire 2.3mn population into the south, causing a severe humanitarian crisis.

[A tentative deal for the release of 50 civilian hostages](#) — women and children — held in Gaza in exchange for 150 Palestinian women and children held in Israeli jails is expected to begin on Friday, alongside a four-day ceasefire brokered by Qatar.

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