### Hamas’ Attack on Israel

Messages: Swords of Iron - War in the South

10 October 2023, 14:00 Israel time

**Spokesperson - Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

**Background:**

On Saturday (7 October), in an act of war, hundreds of terrorists infiltrated Israel at a number of locations and at the same time, massive rocket barrages were launched at Israeli territory.

This constituted a far-reaching terrorist attack on Israel's civilians in the morning of the Jewish festival of Simchat Torah, when hundreds of thousands of Israelis were on their way to synagogues to celebrate the holiday and Shabbat in their communities with their families.

As part of the attack, hundreds of terrorists infiltrated Israeli territory by land, sea, and air, and advanced into Israeli communities near the Gaza Strip. This while indiscriminate firing - of more than 3,500 rockets and missiles so far - was targeting towns and cities in the south, the center of the country, and Jerusalem with the intent of maximizing harm to civilians.

Thus far, more than 900 people have been murdered in Israel and more than 2,600 wounded to varying degrees. It is also reported that over 130 people are classified as missing or captives after being kidnapped and taken to Gaza. There is reason to believe that these figures will continue to rise.

Over the past two days (8-9 October), anti-tank missiles and mortar shells were fired from Lebanese territory at IDF positions on the Lebanese border and terrorists, under the auspices of Hezbollah, attempted to infiltrate Israel. In response, Hezbollah's tent, which is located south of the Blue Line in the Mount Dov area, was destroyed and IDF forces returned fire towards the sources of the shooting and thwarted the infiltration of the terrorists.

As a result of these events, Israel is in a war targeting the terrorist organizations in Gaza. Its security forces are working to protect Israeli civilians on all fronts. The IDF will safeguard the lives of Israeli citizens, while Hamas and all other involved terrorists will pay a heavy price.

Many countries have expressed their identification with Israel and their unequivocable support of the State of Israel. In many cities (including New York, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Brasilia and Kyiv) buildings and important monuments were lit up in blue and white or with the Israeli flag.

In strong contrast, the Iranian regime expressed its support for the terrorist activities of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). Iranian President Raisi held a phone conversation with Ismail Haniyeh, the Head of Hamas' Political Bureau, as well as one with Ziyad Nakhaleh, Secretary-General of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), in which he "congratulated the Palestinian people on the victories of the resistance and emphasized Iran's support for the people and the resistance," and in addition he conveyed his "appreciation for the actions of Hamas' fighters and all the fighters in the battlefields." Raisi added that "Iran supports the resistance and the Palestinian people, and that you bring happiness to the Islamic nation with this initiative."

According to news reports, Esmail Qanni, Commander of Iran's Quds Force, visited Lebanon on Saturday (7 October) – the first day of the attack – and held meetings with senior Hamas officials Ismail Haniyeh and Saleh Al-'Arouri.

**Messages:**

* Hamas, an internationally recognized terrorist organization, initiated a massive attack on the citizens of Israel by infiltrating terrorists into communities in the south, as well as by launching extensive and indiscriminate missile and rocket fire that targeted Israeli civilians from the south of the country to Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. The terrorists infiltrated southern communities and began a murder spree, killing families and individuals in their homes, in the streets, and on their way to synagogue, in addition to kidnapping to the Gaza Strip anyone – in particular defenseless families, women and children - who crossed their path.
* This was a deadly and barbaric attack, evocative of ISIS's methods of operation, that was initiated by terrorist organizations led by Hamas and launched with no legitimate pretext or provocative prior action on the part of Israel. Furthermore, this attack came after a long period in which Israel strove to bring calm to the Gaza Strip by making extensive efforts to improve the economic situation of Palestinians, with an emphasis on long-term projects in Gaza. Yet while Israel was working to stabilize the area, Hamas launched a murderous and destructive terrorist operation designed to hurt Israel and undermine stability in the area.
* The terrorist organizations have shown their true faces: bloodthirsty and uncontrollable groups with similar roots to those of ISIS, who are devoid of any moral inhibitions, and are motivated by hatred, the desire to hurt Israeli citizens in every way, and to bring about the destruction of the State of Israel. Hamas is not interested in the safety or well-being of civilians in the Gaza Strip, and views them as nothing more than pawns to be exploited in its efforts to harm the citizens of Israel.
* The terrorists were raised with constant exposure to incessant incitement to murder Israelis, incitement that also includes the encouragement of terrorism, the glorification of terrorists, and the compensating of assailants and their families.
* **Israel is in a war against the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip.** Hamas started this war, and Israel is preparing for a prolonged military response to remove the threat posed by that organization. Hamas is the ruler of the Gaza Strip, controlling all aspects of life there. It is behind this attack, and it will be held accountable for the results of these events. Hamas’ leadership bears full responsibility for the current deterioration and for the actions Israel must take in response. Israel will do everything necessary to protect its citizens and its territory.
* The terrorist organizations involved are branches of the Ayatollah regime in Iran, which proactively promotes terrorist activity in Israel and against Israeli and Jewish targets around the world. Iranian President Raisi spoke with Ismail Haniyeh, the Head of Hamas' Political Bureau, as well as with Ziyad Nakhaleh, Secretary-General of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), and expressed his support for the atrocious actions of the terrorist organization.
* Hamas would not have been able to carry this murderous attack without the financing, logistical support and weapons it received from Iran. Iran bears direct responsibility for Hamas' capabilities, and therefore bears responsibility also for the use Hamas makes of these capabilities.
* Israeli security forces have restored full control over all the communities and the security fence area on the border with the Gaza Strip, and are preparing for the next steps.
* The passage of fuel and goods to the Gaza Strip has been halted, as has the supply of water and electricity originating in Israel. A country under attack cannot continue to support its attackers.
* **Israel will act to free the hostages that were kidnapped to the Gaza Strip, to heavily damage the terrorist infrastructure, and to reach a situation in which no terrorist group in Gaza will be able to harm Israeli citizens again.**
* The terrorist organizations operate knowingly and deliberately from within civilian populated areas and adjacent to humanitarian buildings and institutions, making cynical use of them. Israel is doing, and will continue to do, everything possible to prevent harm to non-involved persons. However, these terrorist organizations which intentionally operate from within the civilian population are committing double war crimes: indiscriminately targeting Israeli civilians while using the residents of the Gaza Strip as human shields.
* The international community should make it clear to the axis states (Iran, Syria, and Lebanon) and to the terrorist organizations in the region that they must refrain from taking part in Hamas’ war and stipulate that they should not promote, encourage, or enable the opening of another front against Israel. The expansion of the arena of combat against Israel will be met with a particularly harsh response, including determined and lethal actions by Israel.
* Israel expects the international community to condemn the terrorist attack on Israeli citizens and to express clear support for Israel's complete right to defend itself. Israel will act resolutely against the terrorist organizations and will do all that is necessary to protect its citizens.