

# Captured Hamas documents show that Hamas started war with Israel on October 7, 2023 in order to derail Saudi-Israel peace deal

Hezbollah and Iran were in on the plot

Marcus Walker and Summer Said  
 Wall Street Journal  
 May 17, 2025

Top leaders of Palestinian Islamist group Hamas launched their October 7, 2023, attack on Israel aiming to torpedo peace negotiations between Israel and Saudi Arabia, according to minutes of a high-level meeting in Gaza that Israel’s military said it discovered in a tunnel beneath the enclave.

Days before the assault that left nearly 1200 dead, Yahya Sinwar, Hamas’s Gaza chief, told fellow militants that an “extraordinary act” was required to derail the normalisation talks that he said risked marginalising the Palestinian cause, the document, reviewed by The Wall Street Journal, said.

The plan worked – at a terrible price.

Iran-backed Hamas’s onslaught of killing and kidnapping sparked an Israeli military campaign to destroy the militants that has killed more than 60,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza health authorities, and left the territory in ruins. That has fuelled anger across the Arab world and beyond, halting progress toward normalisation, at least for now.

President Trump, visiting Riyadh on Tuesday, acknowledged as much, calling on Saudi Arabia to establish relations with Israel but saying, “You’ll do it in your own time.” The meeting minutes – from an October 2, 2023, gathering of Hamas’s political bureau in Gaza – cite Sinwar as saying, “There is no doubt that the Saudi-Zionist normalisation agreement is progressing significantly.” He warned a deal would “open the door for the majority of Arab and Islamic countries to follow the same path.” For Sinwar and Hamas, who have called for total destruction of Israel and the creation of a Palestinian state between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, this was unacceptable. Sinwar said it was time to unleash an attack that had been in the planning stages for two years.

The goal, he said, is “to bring about a major move or a strategic shift in the paths and balances of the region with regard to the Palestinian cause.” He expected to get help from the other Iranian-backed forces of the so-called axis of resistance to Israel.

Hamas didn’t respond to a request for comment on the authenticity of the document or its contents. Arab intelligence officials familiar with Hamas and its records said the document appears to be genuine, as do others the Israeli military says it found in Gaza.

Those documents, reviewed by the Journal, show mounting concern among Hamas leaders about the progress of US-brokered talks between Israel and Saudi Arabia. Officials of all three countries were saying in 2023 that differences were narrowing.

This newest cache of Hamas records adds a new link in the chain of events leading up to October 7, 2023, the deadliest day for Israelis since the country’s founding.

The Journal, citing senior members of Hamas and Hezbollah, has reported that another meeting connected to the attack took place on October 2 that year, this one in Beirut involving representatives of Hamas and Iranian security officials. Iran approved the planned attack, those people said.

Other Hamas and Hezbollah officials have disputed that, saying details of the attack, including the scope and the date, were kept tightly under wraps by Hamas’s military wing in Gaza.

Senior officials from Iran and Hezbollah had been discussing attack options with Hamas since the summer of 2021. Iran also gave Hamas weapons, financing and training over a long period, including combat training in the weeks before October 7, according to intelligence officials from several countries.



أمانة سر المكتب السياسي  
إقليم غزة



محضر اجتماع المكتب السياسي

اليوم	التاريخ	الساعة	رقم الجلسة	م
الاثنين	02/10/2023	01:00 م	51	م

الحضور:

م	الاسم	حاضر	معتذر	ملاحظات	م	الاسم	حاضر	معتذر	ملاحظات
1	يحيى السنوار	✓			12	سهيل الهندي		✓	عذر السفر
2	خليل الحية	✓			13	عصام الدغليس		✓	
3	كمال أبو عون	✓			14	علي العامودي	✓		
4	روحي مشتهى	✓			15	غازي حمد		✓	عذر السفر
5	إسماعيل برهوم	✓			16	فخحي حماد	✓		عذر السفر
6	باسم نعيم	✓			17	محمود الزاهر	✓		
7	جميلة الشنطي	✓			18	مروان عيسى	✓		
8	جواد أبو شمالة	✓			19	أسامة المزيني	✓		
9	زكريا أبو معمر	✓			20	نزار عوض الله	✓		عذر السفر



بعد الأعياد:  
 1. استمرار حالة الحذر واليقظة الأمنية، وضبط الميدان بحكمة ونعومة.  
 2. أعلى درجات الجاهزية العسكرية، وعدم تمكين العدو من النيل منا.  
 3. مراقبة ممارسات الاحتلال في الأقصى والقدس، والحديث مع الوسطاء لتأكيد ما نقوله من ضمانات للالتزام من قبل العدو في المسجد الأقصى، والجاهزية للقيام بواجبنا الشرعي والوطني في الدفاع عن الأقصى إن لزم.  
 • التطبيع السعودي الصهيوني:  
 1. مما لا شك فيه أن اتفاق التطبيع السعودي الصهيوني يتقدم بصورة كبيرة، خاصة في ظل الإجراءات العملية (زيارات الوزراء الصهاينة للسعودية، الحديث الإعلامي).  
 2. التطبيع مع السعودية سيحدث تغييراً استراتيجياً في المنطقة والإقليم والعالم، وسيفتح الباب أمام غالبية الدول العربية والإسلامية للاتحاد في ذات المسار، وسيزيد التعقيدات أمام مشروع المقاومة، ومحور القدس.  
 3. لابد من عمل غير عادي من قبل الحركة، وقوى محور المقاومة لإحداث حراك كبير أو تحول استراتيجي في المسارات والتوازنات في المنطقة وبما يخص القضية الفلسطينية ومواجهة التطبيع والتهجير للمنطقة.

11/16

دورة سيف القدس  
 2025-2021

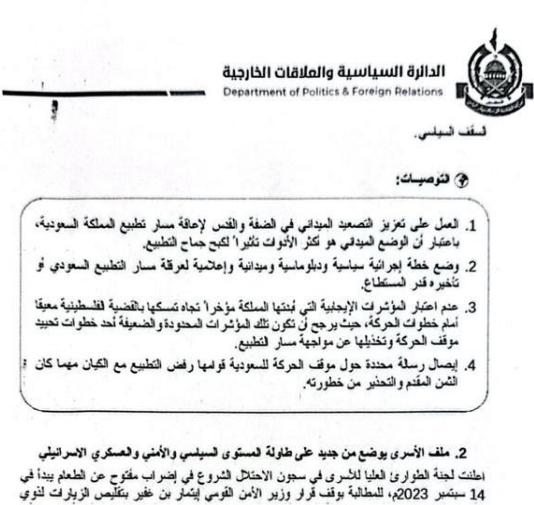
The Israeli military says it found minutes from an October 2, 2023, meeting of Hamas leadership at which Yahya Sinwar said an 'extraordinary act' was needed to confront Israeli-Saudi normalisation. But Tehran and Hezbollah made it clear to Hamas that they didn’t want to end up in a direct, all-out war with Israel, according to officials from the axis as well as Israeli intelligence.

Many of the figures directly involved in planning the October 7 attacks are now dead. Sinwar was killed by Israeli troops in Gaza last October. Most of Hamas’s other top leaders in Gaza have also been killed, including some who were present at the October 2 political bureau meeting, such as Marwan Issa.

Israel has also killed top Hamas leaders in exile, including Ismail Haniyeh, who was the most powerful person in the movement along with Sinwar. On Tuesday, an Israeli air strike in Gaza targeted Sinwar’s brother, Mohammed, head of Hamas’ military operations; it wasn’t clear whether he had been killed.

Among the other internal Hamas documents found by the Israeli military and reviewed by the Journal was a September 2023 report that recommended escalating the conflict in the West Bank and Jerusalem to make Saudi-Israeli normalisation more difficult.

The report expressed mistrust of Saudi pledges to uphold Palestinian interests, calling them “weak and limited steps to neutralise” Hamas and stop it from fighting back against normalisation.



Other Hamas documents the Israeli military found include a military briefing warning that Arab-Israel normalisation would destroy the Palestinian cause, left, and a political analysis recommending an escalation of the conflict in the West Bank and Jerusalem.

Saudi relations with the Iranian-backed Hamas had been frosty ever since Hamas violently wrested control of the Gaza Strip from rival Palestinian faction Fatah.

An internal briefing marked “secret” from August 2022, written by Hamas’s military leadership, concludes: “It has become the duty of the movement to reposition itself to ... preserve the survival of the Palestinian cause in the face of the broad wave of normalisation by Arab countries, which aims primarily to liquidate the Palestinian cause.” In response, Hamas was strengthening its co-ordination with Hezbollah as well as other Palestinian militant factions, the briefing says.

Saudi-Israeli normalisation would mark the biggest change in Israel’s political standing in the Middle East since it signed peace treaties with Jordan and Egypt decades ago. In 2020, Israel also established full diplomatic relations with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, agreements known as the Abraham Accords.

But a deal with Riyadh has long been the true prize for Israel – and a major goal for Washington, as it seeks to organise a regional coalition to contain Iran.

The heavy toll of death and destruction in Gaza has changed the political calculus for Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. The prince has told a number of foreign visitors in the past year that he can’t proceed with normalisation unless Israel meets two conditions: halting the war in Gaza, and agreeing to a diplomatic process would eventually lead to a Palestinian state.

But the October 7 attack hardened attitudes in Israel, potentially for years to come. Palestinian statehood has become anathema for most of the Israeli political spectrum.

Also among the documents that Israel’s military said it found is a Hamas job advertisement from October 2022, seeking a person to spearhead diplomatic efforts to derail normalisation. It isn’t clear where the advertisement was posted – or how much the job paid.

The vacancy at Hamas’s Department of Arab and Islamic Cooperation sought a university graduate skilled in negotiation and communication. Part of the job description: “Marketing the movement’s programs to confront normalisation,” including by getting grassroots organisations in the Arab world to boycott entities that supported normal relations with Israel.