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## IDF: Oct. 7 mastermind Sinwar killed in Gaza

No prior evidence had preceded strike on the building; six hostages murdered in Rafah thought to have been held with him

**Bar Peleg and Josh Breiner**

The Israel Defense Forces confirmed on Thursday that Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar was killed in the Gaza Strip. The IDF added that there were no signs of the presence of hostages in the area in which Sinwar was killed. Hamas sources told Reuters that there are indications that suggest that Sinwar had been killed in an Israeli operation in Gaza.

A DNA sample from the body was sent to the Institute of Forensic Medicine, and dental images were sent to the police's forensic science unit. The DNA sample was compared to a sample from Sinwar collected when he was an inmate in Israeli prison. The IDF and the Shin Bet security service said that dozens of operations took place in the last year and the past few weeks in the area where Sinwar was killed that "limited Yahya Sinwar's ability to act... and led to his death."

Money, identification documents and combat equipment were found on the bodies of the terrorists. The troops that encountered the terrorists were not in the area with the intent of undertaking a targeted killing operation and did not have prior

intelligence that Sinwar was present there.

The soldiers that killed the three are in training to be squad commanders, and are not part of a commando unit. They were operating in the area to locate Hamas members. The troops began to suspect that there were Hamas terrorists present in the building and opened fire with tank shells and shoulder-fired missiles. Troops subsequently used drones to examine the building and located the bodies. It was discovered that explosive devices had been planted in the building, and combat engineer soldiers were deployed to the site to disarm them.

Sinwar had been hiding in tunnels in Gaza since October 7 as he attempted to evade Israel. He maintained contact with his top brass for 11 months, and indirectly with the countries mediating a possible hostage/cease-fire deal with Israel, primarily through couriers.

Last month, it was revealed that Sinwar had not been in contact with anyone outside the tunnels for a relatively long time. Israel's security establishment investigated whether Sinwar had been wounded in one of the heavy airstrikes on Gaza's

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Soldiers surrounding a body that was identified as Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar.

**Amos Harel**

### What will the day after Sinwar look like?

Yahya Sinwar's end came by chance. The man more responsible than anyone else for the October 7 massacre and for the regional war that broke out in its wake was not killed in a clever ploy by the Shin Bet and the Mossad, wasn't assassinated in battle by a special commando unit, nor did he find his death in a precise air force bombardment.

He died, according to all indications, in a routine clash in Rafah with an Israeli infantry and armored force, whose troops had no idea the Hamas leader (and most wanted fugitive) was in the area.

Apart from the news that Sinwar was killed, the most important piece of information is that no hostages were

harmed in the incident. Two other terrorists were killed with him. In the past year, when he moved, Sinwar was frequently surrounded by a human shield in the form of different groups of Israeli hostages. Defense officials believe that the six hostages murdered by Hamas in Rafah at the end of August were held alongside Sinwar in the tunnels. In a few cases, Israel refrained from attacking him due to concern for the lives of hostages near him.

However, senior Israel Defense Forces sources said that apparently like his colleague Mohammed Deif, who was assassinated in July in the

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**Jonathan Lis**

### Will Sinwar's death advance hostages' release?

Israeli officials are having a difficult time at this stage assessing how the killing of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar will affect the fate of the hostages in Gaza and any possible deal for possible release. In addition to concerns that Hamas will seek to avenge its leader's death by harming the hostages, officials are also expressing hope that now that Sinwar is out of the picture, breaking the deadlock in talks over a hostage deal and steering Hamas toward a cease-fire agreement may be achievable. "It's too early to know how the killing will affect the deal," one source involved in the negotiations acknowledged.

Sinwar's death raises four major

questions regarding the fate of the 101 hostages remaining in Gaza, 35 of whom have been declared dead:

The first question is who will replace Sinwar? That's the key question when it comes to assessing whether it will now be possible to advance an agreement for the hostages' release and an end to the fighting. In addition to considering whether Sinwar's successor will want to pursue a deal or "fight to the death," it isn't clear if a new Hamas leader would even be capable of reaching all of the hostages and their captors, make decisions on the issue and prevent anarchy.

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**Yossi Melman**

### A cruel sadist who inflicted disaster on Palestinians

No doubt Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar deserved to die. Even in the context and perspective of a terrorist organization he was an exception.

Since his twenties as a young terrorist, he was known for his cruelty and sadistic instincts. He specialized in torturing and murdering his Palestinian brothers whom he suspected of being collaborators with Israel. In 1988, he was sentenced to life in prison, not for killing his Israeli enemies, but for the murder of Palestinians, some of them innocent.

He was released after 22 years in a shameful swap in which one Israeli soldier (Gilad Shalit) was released for more than 1,000 Palestinian terrorists.

The deal was approved by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who wanted to divert attention from the then-unprecedented street protests against his failed economic and social policies, which were threatening to topple his government.

Seven years after his prison release Sinwar climbed to the top and became the undisputed leader of Hamas in Gaza.

In retrospect, his decision to launch the surprising and brutal invasion of Israel with instructions to kill, torture and rape with no mercy civilian Israelis women, men, children and babies

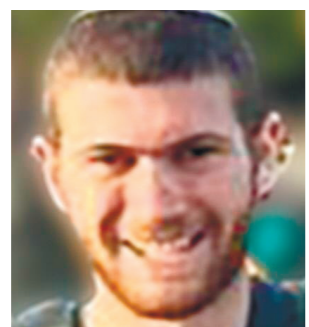
See **SADIST, Page 4**

### Soldiers ambushed, four Hezbollah terrorists killed

### Five Golani soldiers killed in southern Lebanon combat



Ofek Bachar



Elyashiv Eitan Wieder



Elad Siman Tov



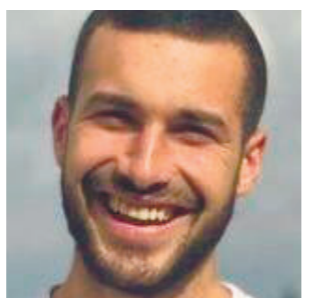
Yehudah Dror Yahalom



Bar Peleg and Ofer Aderet

The Israel Defense Forces announced that five soldiers were killed during fighting in southern Lebanon on Thursday. All five soldiers are from the Golani reconnaissance unit and are named as Major Ofek Bachar, 24, from Nes Ziona; Capt. Elad Siman Tov,

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Yakov Hillel

## America's warning to Israel to increase Gaza aid came too late for too many

**Dahlia Scheindlin**

For the "why is Israel singled out?" crowd: U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin were absolutely correct to instruct Israel to increase humanitarian aid to Gaza urgently or risk running afoul of the U.S.' own regulations on military exports.

In February, U.S. President Joe Biden issued a National Security Memo (NSM-20) requiring recipients of U.S. military aid to commit that they would not to use these weapons to violate human rights, in compliance with international law.

The requirement wasn't invented for Israel but applies to seven relevant countries. In March, Israel committed to the U.S. government's terms. The let-



Children in Gaza gathering to receive food.

Mohammed Salem/Reuters

ter published on Tuesday was no punishment: it was a long-delayed, nonnegotiable matter of implementing U.S. policy consistently. But giv-

en Israel's exceptional status in U.S. military export policies, this does represent another inch — maybe two — up the ladder to signal con-

cern over Israel's interminable war in Gaza, beyond rhetoric.

But for the reality on the ground in this moment,

the U.S. move falls flat, for three key reasons.

The first and biggest reason is that it's too late, for too many. The humanitarian condition is a thimble of water for an inferno. Over a year has passed since Israel contained and beat back Hamas' terror attack of October 7. The war has long since failed to topple Hamas or return Israeli hostages, and has wreaked hell on every single Palestinian in Gaza. The U.S. letter calls for 350 trucks of aid to enter per day; before October 7, 2023, 500 trucks entered daily, for a population that was not almost entirely displaced, whose civilian infrastructure had not been wrecked, including water, food, fuel and medical supplies or services. And the supplies that entered before October 7 kept barely Gaza

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