

Israel Declares 'State of Readiness for War' After Hamas Claims Major Rocket Attack from Gaza Strip

The Israeli military says it is striking targets in the Gaza Strip as air raid sirens were sounded in Jerusalem after the Hamas militant group announced a new operation against Israel.

By [Outlook](#)

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On Saturday morning, Israel announced a "state of preparedness for conflict" in response to a massive barrage of rockets from the Gaza Strip and an intrusion into its southern region. This resulted in the death of at least one person and injuries to 16 others so far.

The Israeli military says it is striking targets in the Gaza Strip as air raid sirens were sounded in Jerusalem after the Hamas militant group announced a new operation against Israel. The sounds of at least three explosions could be heard as Israel deployed anti-rocket defences. The attack on Jerusalem is considered a major escalation by Israel.

The elusive leader of Hamas' military wing says the armed group has launched a new military operation against Israel. In a rare public statement, Mohammed Deif said that 5,000 rockets had been fired into Israel early Saturday to begin "Operation Al-Aqsa Storm."

"We've decided to say enough is enough," Deif said as he urged all Palestinians to confront Israel. Deif, who has survived multiple Israeli assassination attempts, does not make public appearances. His message was delivered in a recording.

The Israel military had ordered residents along the border area to remain indoors.

Israel's Minister of Defence, Yoav Gallant, following an operational situation assessment Saturday morning warned that "the Hamas [terrorist organisation] has made a grave mistake this morning and launched a war against the State of Israel".

"IDF troops are fighting against the enemy at every location. I call on all of Israel's

citizens to follow security instructions”, he added.

“The State of Israel will win this war”, he asserted.

In a statement, the IDF (Israel Defence Forces) said that Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzl Halevi is holding an assessment and approving plans of action.

“The IDF declares a state of readiness for war. Hamas... which is behind this attack, will bear the results and responsibility for the events,” the statement from the Israeli army said.

Rescue and relief services, Magen David Adom, said that one person has been killed and another 16 are wounded in the rocket attacks on southern and central Israel this morning.

A woman in her 60s was killed in a direct rocket hit in the southern Gderot area.

Another two people are said to be seriously wounded, six moderately and seven with minor injuries, the medics of the rescue services said.

IDF warned that “the Hamas terror group will pay a very heavy price” for its surprise attack this morning.

“Hamas carried out a combined operation that included firing rockets and a terrorist infiltration into the territory of the State of Israel,” the Israeli army said.

“The IDF will protect the residents of the State of Israel, the Hamas terror organisation will pay a very heavy price”, it added.

The Head of Hamas’ military wing, Mohammed Deif, in a statement, said

“We warned the enemy not to continue its aggression against the Al-Aqsa Mosque”, Ha’aretz online reported.

“This is only the first stage” of Hamas’ renewed efforts against Israel, he said.

Deif urged Arabs in Jerusalem and inside Israel, in the Negev, the Galilee and northern Israel to join the “revolution” and “set the earth on fire under the feet of the occupiers”.

Deif also called upon the “Islamic resistance in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon” to “merge their resistance with that of the Palestinians” and “start marching towards Palestine now”.

Saleh al-Aroui, deputy head of Hamas, who is considered to be its leader in the West Bank, issued a similar statement calling on the Arab and Islamic nations to join “Operation al-Aqsa Flood”.

The Israeli military has issued instructions to the residents of towns near the Gaza Strip to remain in their homes, and the rest of the public to remain near bomb shelters.

“Unverified footage from the Gaza Strip purports to show Hamas terrorists with the body of an IDF soldier taken from Israel during the attack this morning,” the Times of Israel newspaper reported.

“The graphic videos show the body being taken out of a truck, as a crowd swarms

around it", it reported.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was on his way to the Defence Ministry Headquarters in order to conduct a security assessment with the participation of all of the heads of the security establishment, a statement from the PMO said.

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Featured image: Hamas' military wing (Photo: AP/Fatima Shbair)

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