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This is a special edition of the Global News podcast from the BBC World Service. I'm Nick Miles and at 13 hours GMT on Saturday, the 7th of October, we're bringing you the latest on the situation unfolding in Israel after an unprecedented assault by air, sea and ground by Palestinian militants in Gaza. Dozens of gunmen crossed the border infiltrating southern Israel. There are reports of civilians and soldiers being taken hostage. Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is unequivocal in his response.

This morning, Hamas launched a murderous surprise attack against the state of Israel and its citizens. We are at war and we will win it.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas says his people have the right to defend themselves against what he calls the terror of settlers and occupation troops. We have a view from the West Bank.

For months, unprecedented levels of Israeli violence against Palestinian civilians, record numbers of settler attacks, of settler raids on Al-Aqsa mosque.

There's been international condemnation. Egypt calls for maximum restraint from both sides and we ask our security correspondent, why was Israel caught off guard?

In the early hours, the Palestinian militant group Hamas launched a surprise attack on Israel beginning with several thousand rockets fired into the south. The rocket attacks have struck Tel Aviv and areas around Gaza. The town of Ashkelon saw several major explosions. Israelis have been warned to stay inside.

Dozens of militants appear to have entered southern Israel. There have been reports of military vehicles being attacked and Israeli soldiers and civilians being kidnapped and taken into Gaza.

One video obtained by the news agency Reuters shows Palestinians taking out what appears to be the dead body of an Israeli soldier from a tank while Palestinians cheer on the border between Gaza and Israel.

Mahamad's military commander, Muhammad Dave, announced the start of the operation in a broadcast on Hamas media, calling on Palestinians everywhere to fight.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says the country is at war and will win.

Citizens of Israel, we are at war, not in an operation or in rounds, but at war. This

morning Hamas launched a murderous surprise attack against the state of Israel and its citizens. We have been in this since the early morning hours. I convene the heads of the security establishment and ordered, first of all, to clear out the communities that have been infiltrated by terrorists. This currently is being carried out.

At the same time, I have ordered an extensive mobilization of reserves and that we return fire of a magnitude that the enemy has not known. The enemy will pay an unprecedented price. In the meantime, I call on the citizens of Israel to strictly adhere to the directives of the army and home front command. We are at war and we will win it.

Israel has already launched retaliatory airstrikes on Gaza. The Israeli army has said it has so far attacked 17 military compounds and four Hamas operational headquarters. We'll have more on the response later in the podcast. First, though, let's get an update on the latest situation. Julian Marshall spoke to our correspondent in Jerusalem, Yulan, now.

We're now more than eight hours since this fighting began and what we're hearing Israeli media reports saying that at least 40 Israelis are dead and something like 740 people have been injured. So really unprecedented numbers, nothing like I've seen before covering repeated conflicts between Israel and Palestinian militants in Gaza since Hamas took over the Gaza Strip back in 2007. And then what's really the nightmare scenario for people in southern Israel in particular is to have had what seems like dozens of Palestinian militants infiltrating from the Gaza Strip. 14 locations affected according to Israeli media reports. And we've had both Hamas social media channels and Islamic Jihad channels. Islamic Jihad, of course, is the second biggest militant group in Gaza. They've been putting out videos apparently showing Israeli soldiers and civilians captured by their fighters. And Islamic Jihad says some of them have been taken to Gaza, that they're being held hostage. That would, of course, complicate Israel's military response when it comes to all that's happened.

Has there been any Israeli confirmation, though, of the kidnapping of soldiers and civilians?

When we've asked the Israeli military about those reports, they have said that they're aware of them and they haven't wanted to comment directly at this stage. There are unverified videos that we've seen that do appear to show Israeli civilians on the streets that look very much like they're in the south of the Gaza Strip. There are also videos that appear to be shot inside Israeli military bases where we can read signs and things that do locate them as being next to the Gaza Strip. The picture is still very unclear at the moment and very fast developing. I mean, you get a sense of just how chaotic it is watching Israeli television where you've had people in the past hours calling in saying that there are Palestinian militants in the villages where they live close to the Gaza Strip. One woman saying that her father had been taken captive. People really frightened and calling for the Israeli military or Israeli police to come and rescue them. There are lots of party goers at a big overnight party in the Israeli desert close to the Gaza Strip. There are pictures of them running away, screaming as they hear. Gunfire early this morning. We've had reports, somebody that knows one of my colleagues saying that she was with somebody there who was shot and killed. It's really very shocking stuff for Israelis and also I have to say for Palestinians too because the speed with which this has happened has really taken people by surprise and a lot of attention has been focused on the occupied West Bank in recent weeks and the tensions there. We have not been focused so much on what has been happening in Gaza. And Yelam, what are you hearing from Gaza where Israel

has already been carrying out retaliatory strikes? We know that there have been large explosions in the Gaza Strip where Israeli warplanes have been in action. There are reports there of Palestinian casualties. Very quickly this morning schools, businesses in Gaza were closed up. People rushed beforehand to try to buy supplies as much as possible knowing from the past painful experience that what's now set to happen could be a long and drawn out conflict and it would be very difficult for them to provide for their families. Of course Gaza is such an impoverished place. Already living conditions are extremely tough. We know that there are now power shortages there are anyway but also internet outages which can make it more difficult to find out exactly what's going on.

And anybody speculating about the timing of this assault by Hamas because this is very close is it not to the 50th anniversary of the Yom Kippur war?

Indeed and there's been so much written in Israeli media reports in recent days reflecting on that big 50th anniversary of the Yom Kippur war when Israel was caught by surprise by Egypt and Syria and reflections on that. So I think now that's going to lead to inevitable new reflections about failings of Israeli military and Israeli intelligence in this case. Yulam Nel in Jerusalem. The BBC's Rushdie Abu Alouf is in Gaza City and has been keeping us up to date from there. Tension has been always high in this area since Hamas captured Gaza about 17 years ago but especially the last two, three weeks we have seen Palestinians protesting along the border and then Israel responded by closing the northern border with Gaza preventing about 18,000 workers from going into Israel. Then suddenly we understand from sources that Qatar and Egypt managed to secure some sort of understanding. Hamas stopped the protest along the border and Israel reopened the crossing but tension was still remain high. But by far this is the biggest operation I think since Hamas took over 17 years ago. It's been a surprise not only for the Israelis but I think also for the people in Gaza they woke up as they were about to start their life. People were trying to go to school. Saturday is a normal working day in Gaza so kids were out in the street going to their school and suddenly we hear like thousands of rockets being fired from everywhere. That caused big panic to people. Next to me is the downtown Gaza. I can see most of the shops are closed. Most of the Gaza's are staying indoor because they believe that Israel will sooner or later respond harshly to this latest barrage of rockets. Rushdie Abu Alouf. This violence is the latest upsurge in decades of fraught relations between Israel and the Palestinian territories. Mike Thompson is our Arab Affairs editor. I asked him how different this flare up is from previous events. Well the last big confrontation was in May 2021 where hundreds of Palestinians were killed around 250 people in Gaza. It's thought and 13 in Israel. But now the big difference there is that there were hundreds of rockets but we're hearing thousands here. Not only that but this has been an invasion by fighters on the ground. They've come into Israel on the ground unlike simply firing missiles of the country. Yeah and the situation within Gaza has been very difficult in terms of humanitarian situation. Do we know why Hamas may have actually launched this now? Well it's still guesswork but you could look for instance at the normalization in prospect it seems with Saudi Arabia, Saudi Arabia and Israel and they were watching that with great concern. Also of course you've got the holiday period in Israel at the moment. You've got a Saturday. There's an opportunity here I think they might have seen and of course you've got that huge increase in violence over the last nine months to a year. Particularly in the West Bank more than 200 Palestinians

killed and a growing anger amongst the Palestinian community about what's happening. A lot of people may be confused because there has been a blockade pretty much fully around Gaza from air and land and sea for more than a decade now. How is it possible for Hamas to actually get the resources and the wherewithal to create such a barrage of rocket fire? Well it's thought that a lot of its ingenuity really, a lot of homemade weapons. There was a big demonstration, big parade by Islamic Jihad and they were showing off lots of homemade rockets, homemade drones and that sort of thing which they've managed to put together themselves in what's thought to be sort of underground factories. There's also been quite a lot of funding from Iran and it's thought the US believes that there's around a hundred million dollars a year coming in from Iran. So that's backing it to, that's of course in addition to the humanitarian money that comes in from European Union, US and also Qatar. And it's hard to see from the outside what Hamas may gain from this because the response from Israel will be huge, won't it? It's going to be massive, yes. As we heard earlier, the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu talking about, we are at war. This is not an operation, this is a war and there's going to be enormous repercussions. But I think there's been a simmering frustration amongst the Palestinian community, not just in Gaza but also in the West Bank and I think now there's been this feeling that they have to do something but they're really going to pay a very heavy price for this it seems. Mike Thompson. Israeli government officials have told the BBC that a major investigation is being launched as to how Israeli intelligence failed to see this massive and well-coordinated Hamas attack coming. Frank Gardner is our security correspondent. Oh it's huge, it's much bigger than anything we've seen for a very long time. In a way, it sort of echoes in a different way what happened in 1973 with the Yom Kippur war where Arab nations in that case surprised Israel during a religious holiday and what has happened this morning took place right at the end of the Jewish holiday of Sukkot and Israeli intelligence which is vast and extensive and well resourced seems to have been caught completely napping. They've been caught totally off guard. This was a well-coordinated, well-planned, operationally secret complex attack by Hamas to not only infiltrate but launch all these rockets at the same time and to penetrate Israeli border security and I mean Israelis that I've spoken to, Israeli officials, this is when I asked them I said how did this happen? How could this have happened? They say we have no idea an investigation is being launched and it'll go on for a long time but they simply, Israelis are staggered and they're asking their own government how on earth did this happen because you know Israeli intelligence is supposed to have informants embedded inside organizations not just Hamas but Islamic jihad, Hezbollah and so on and yet they didn't see this coming or if they did they failed to act on it. And Frank with regards to the response we can expect from Israel particularly in the past when there have been hostages taken Israeli hostages which it looks or so that may well be the case this time the response has been strong and swift doesn't it? Well it's already begun they've launched what they call Operation Swords of Iron which includes airstrikes on Hamas positions in Gaza and undoubtedly civilians will die in that but I think if it comes to hostages which the Palestinian Hamas say are not hostages they're prisoners of war which I think if they are civilians is not the correct term but that will have to be a, there's only two ways to resolve that either by a special forces operation so Israel is not commenting on it but almost certainly they will be putting together something with their special forces

kind of elite unit to try and rescue them or at least to draw up that option for the prime minister should he choose to go that way or by negotiation and this is not the time for either side to be in the mood to negotiate while you know tensions and conflict are on the rise so I think what's worrying Israelis is that if you look at Gilad Sharit I might have mispronounced that but anyhow he was an Israeli soldier who was kidnapped and held for five years so this could be a very long drawn out thing which is why they'll want to nip it in the bud and try and rescue them as quickly as possible.

Frank Gardner.

Still to come in this special edition of the Global News Podcast.

With today's attack coming on the last day of the Jewish holiday socott we hear forthright reaction from the deputy mayor of Jerusalem.

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so as that investigation into Israeli intelligence failings gets underway the Israeli military has been placed on a war footing Lieutenant Masha Mickelson is a spokesperson for the Israeli Defense Forces she spoke to Julian Marshall there's currently as we speak two things going on first of all is fighting in these moments in multiple hot points surrounding the Gaza Strip Zikim the raeem military camp Sderot, Bari, Kfar Azza, Nakhal Oz and some more points there has been massive deployment approved by the Ministry of Defense and thousands of reservists have been called for duty because Israel has declared a state of war and we will make Hamas pay for the mistake it made this morning when they chose to attack Israel how many attackers is the Israeli army battling is it possible to put a number on the people who came across the border we don't have exact numbers yet you've seen videos going around social media them entering both by parachutes from the sea on truck on land and right now as we speak IDF air vessels are striking Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip so at what point will you be able to say that you have repelled this assault there are thousands if not tens of thousands of reservists that are being deployed right now towards southern Israel to attempt getting the situation back to normal to regain stability we are hoping that with correct actions by the end of the day we will be closer to clearing Israeli territory of Hamas terrorists but right now what's happening is IDF special units Israeli police special units are going almost door to door in places where we know terrorists have infiltrated and they're clearing apartments making sure there are no terrorists hiding it's a thing that may take hours Masha Mickelson spokesperson for the Israeli Defense Forces there's been condemnation from governments around the world though Iran has expressed support Tehran hosted

leaders of Hamas and Islamic jihad back in June and as we've heard the Palestinian president

Mahmoud Abbas says the Palestinian people have the right to defend themselves against what he called the terror of settlers and occupation troops Noor Odeh is a Palestinian analyst and writer in the west bank city of Ramallah she spoke to my colleague Julian Marshall about today's conflict it's important for all of us to remember the context here which is that for months you and agencies and specialized organizations have documented unprecedented levels of Israeli violence against Palestinian civilians record numbers of settler attacks of settler raids on al-Aqsa mosque which is the holiest Muslim site in Palestine then with a right-wing government in office a government that is in line with these settler groups Palestinians simply had no horizon nothing to look forward to by way of ending this miserable and violent reality of occupation and dispossession we know we've heard from the UN about more than 1200 Palestinians that were literally expelled from their homes communities that have been wiped out in the past few months and and I think what is happening right now comes in that context in Palestinians being fed up having lost all faith having a feeling that they've been completely abandoned and that they need to take matters into their own hands to break this impasse of brutal oppression but so far the Hamas attack in Israel has claimed the lives of a number of civilians is that really what the Palestinian Authority would wish well I don't think that the Palestinian Authority was informed of of these plans or had any part in them and so at this point I think the they find themselves in a very difficult spot if you will it's really difficult to imagine what kind of conversations are happening right now in the Palestinian leadership they are not part of what is happening but they will have to have a part in its resolution the fact that Israeli casualties civilian casualties are involved you know in again in the overall picture for Palestinians for ordinary Palestinians have seen a record number of Palestinian children killed over the past two years it's very difficult to ask them whether they feel sympathetic I think mostly right now there is shock and and the fact that most of the attacks have been directed at Israeli soldiers also that makes it very difficult to hear any dissent among Palestinians against what's happening I mean Egypt is already warned of the dangers of of escalation I mean where is this going Israel has said it is at war yeah Israel has said it is at war we have to also remember that Israel under international law is the occupying power it is a military superpower by international standards it is accused and has been found guilty of prolific human rights violations against Palestinian civilians the fact that the occupied is now attacking the occupier it is novel it is new but Gaza is not occupied it is it is according to the United Nations it remains occupied every aspect of Palestinian life in Gaza remains under the control of the Israeli military in the Israeli state but with this implicit endorsement of the Hamas assault by the Palestinian president um he's removing himself isn't he from any kind of role as mediator I'm not sure that he has endorsed anything but again I think it's it's going to be the Palestinian the Palestinian people have the right to defend themselves against the terror of settlers and occupation troops that's a fragment of legal fact the the Palestinians have the right to defend themselves I'm not sure that that if the Palestinian leadership on it to endorse the Hamas actions that they wouldn't have been more direct new order who's a Palestinian living in Ramallah the BBC's Lipika Pelham lived in Jerusalem for eight years until 2013 I asked her what it was like when Israel comes under attack from neighboring territories or countries the whole time that I lived there only once rockets fell very close to Jerusalem and that was in 2012 and I remember the first reaction was from all the you know I was I had small children and they all went to the bomb shelter so as we as we know that if each house in in Israel has an

integrated bomb shelter and if they don't have it inside the house they have it close you know nearby in a where they can such all run to but in Jerusalem that's the only time that we went to the bomb shelter and yeah so it is there is this shock and panic now I have just spoken to my neighbors actually just before coming to the studio and they just cannot believe that a small group of militants can enter Israel and create you know such a situation of panic and shock and what's the perception amongst them about how Gaza and the militants from Hamas are actually funding themselves who do they blame for this they're blaming Iran and there's an overwhelming feeling that Iran is behind it and it's it is much bigger than it looks like and they also feel that the similar attack an incursion might happen in the north then with the help of Hezbollah and I lived in east very close to east Jerusalem usually they feel that they're safe because militants won't attack Jerusalem because it's so close to Al-Aqsa and in Tom of the Rock and that they won't do anything on missile attacks or anything like that that might damage the religious places but this time they there is this feeling from my neighbors that I've just spoken to that militants might now come from east Jerusalem from the old city and attack west Jerusalem and all of this of course feeds into suspicion between Arab Israelis Israelis who are citizens there and Jewish communities there is an extraordinarily volatile situation it is yeah and they cannot believe there's this real shock and there's this real kind of mistrust in the government and what the government is doing and how how how come there wasn't any intelligence about this and that's why anything can happen there's there really there's a real sense of fear even in Jerusalem among Jerusalemites who didn't usually feel afraid of rocket attacks from Gaza or from anywhere really.

To end this special edition of the global news podcast our international editor Jeremy Bowen has this assessment of today's events. I think we're into unprecedented territory here since Gaza was taken over by Hamas well more than 15 years ago now there've been quite a few cross-border wars there've been Israeli quite serious big incursions into Gaza but never anything like this with Hamas going into Israeli territory in multiple places one of the an Israeli security official has said this morning that there were 21 separate incidents going on the Israelis are using language like we have been attacked this is a state of war it's also very symbolic because it's just been the 50th anniversary of the surprise attack by Egypt and Syria in 1973 the October war the Yom Kippur war which took Israel by surprise and Israelis are saying Israelis I've spoken to this morning are saying it's deliberately similar similar you know this is this is Netanyahu's Yom Kippur we have been taken by surprise that's the kind of message I've been hearing from Israelis who I've spoken to. Is that the answer to the question then why now why has Hamas done this now is it the anniversary is it something else? Well it's not because of the anniversary I think but this has been a great deal of tension and violence has been building up between Israelis and Palestinians for months and months and months there has it's been mainly though in the West Bank which is the land that goes from Jerusalem through

to the Jordan border and it's been that has been the focus of this and there have been a lot of killing going on there for four months and months now so I think that the culmination of all of that this rising tension and during the the current Jewish holiday of Sukkot that's just ending there were quite large-scale events on the actual compound of the al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem which is the third holiest site for Muslims in the world but it's also revered by Jews as the site of the Jewish temple the ancient Jewish temple and they were praying there now it

doesn't sound much but that's something which the Israelis don't permit and which is considered to be

a highly provocative act and so Hamas have been saying that they're acting to protect Jerusalem and they've used the word Jerusalem in the what they're calling this attack they're calling it Jerusalem flood so they're connecting it very much with that because anything that happens that seems

to alter any kind of status quo in Jerusalem does almost inevitably lead to violence and I think that I mean I've been expecting some kind of serious explosion for months now I didn't think it would happen like this I think everybody there has been taken by surprise by what's going on and I think now that the Israel will be planning a very fierce response I think it's highly likely that Israel will send troops into Gaza they have called up reservists the anti-Netanyahu protesters who include reservists who declined their reserve duty in in recent months and have had regular demonstrations against the government have cancelled their demo for the weekend and they

have told their guys to report for duty as normal so there's a great sense of emergency going on and I think this thing can only escalate Jeremy Bowen there speaking to Michelle Hussein and that's all from us for now but there will be a new regular edition of the Global News podcast later on this edition was produced by Harry Bly it was mixed by Ricardo McCarthy the editor is Karen Martin I'm Nick Miles and until next time goodbye

closer clearer even recognize faces and read license plates from 50 feet away it's best to protect your family children and pets ensure their safety with your security cameras all this with no monthly fee get your dual camera security devices now at [uv.com](http://uv.com) [eufy.com](http://eufy.com) that world has eaten up and spit out a lot of young and attractive guys this is the story of one of fashion's dark secrets I was overwhelmed like I had never seen anything like this at the height of Abercrombie and Fitz's success this was me being carefully manipulated being lied too tricked and traded like a commodity investigating allegations that would take me into a world of money sex and power this is world of secrets season one the Abercrombie guys listen wherever you get your podcasts