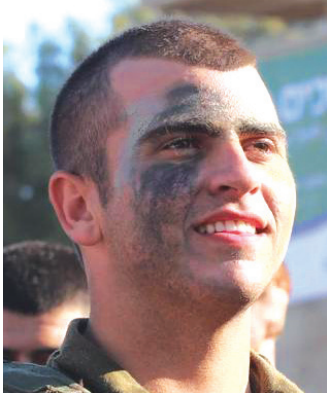


THE PRICE OF WAR



SGT.-MAJ. (RES.)
HADAR KAPELUK (IDF)



WARR. OFC. (RES.)
SERGEY GONTMAHERR (IDF)



SGT.-MAJ. (RES.)
ELKANA YEHUDA SFEZ (IDF)



ST.-SGT.-MAJ. (RES.)
YOAV LEVI (IDF)



SGT.-MAJ. (RES.)
NICHOLAS BERGER (IDF)



SGT.-MAJ. (RES.)
CYDRICK GARIN (IDF)



SGT.-MAJ. (RES.)
AHMAD ABU LATIF (IDF)



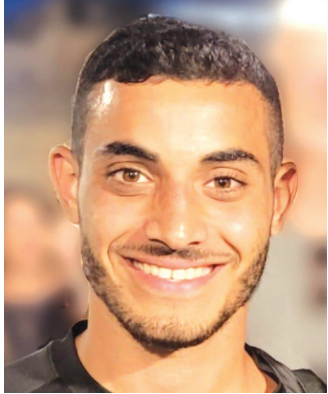
CAPT. (RES.)
NIR BINYAMIN (IDF)



ST.-SGT.-MAJ. (RES.)
ELKANA VIZEL (IDF)



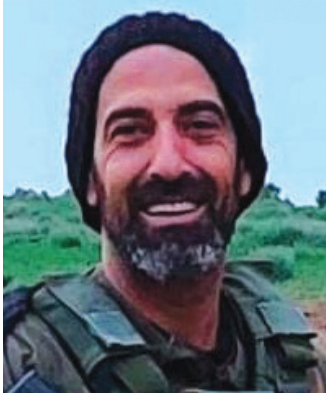
SGT.-MAJ. (RES.)
ISRAEL SOCOL (IDF)



SGT.-MAJ. (RES.)
SAGI IDAN (IDF)



WARR. OFC. (RES.)
MARK KONONOVICH (IDF)



WARR. OFC. (RES.)
SHAY BITON HAYUN (IDF)



WARR. OFC. (RES.)
DANIEL KASAU ZEGEYE (IDF)



WARR. OFC. (RES.)
MATAN LAZAR (IDF)



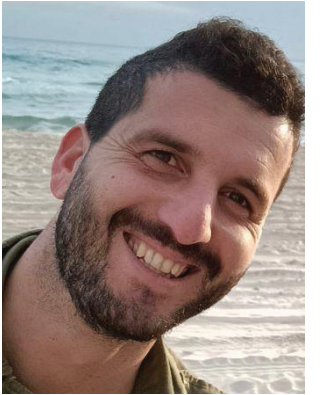
WARR. OFC. (RES.) RAFAEL
ELIAS MOSHEYOFF (IDF)



WARR. OFC. (RES.) BARAK
HAIM BEN VALID (IDF)



WARR. OFC. (RES.)
ITAMAR TAL (IDF)



WARR. OFC. (RES.)
ADAM BISMUT (IDF)



SGT.-MAJ. (RES.)
YOVAL LOPEZ (IDF)



CAPT. (RES.) ARIEL
MORDECHAY WOLLFSTAL (IDF)

A tipping point?

COMMENT

• By DAVID BRINN

On Tuesday morning, even the notoriously obnoxious, impatient Israeli drivers seemed to have lost their core of defiance. People commuted, walked on the streets that were threatening rain, and interacted with each other as if in a zombie-like trance.

It was a broken country that went through the motions of life as the horrendous news of death was released – 21 more beautiful young souls killed; 21 more families experiencing unbelievable grief.

As the details of the mostly reserve soldiers killed in the Gaza building targeted by Hamas were revealed, it was a reminder that Israel is a *kibbutz galuyot* (ingathering of exiles) – Sergey Gontmaher, Yoav Levi, Daniel Kasau Zegeye, Yoav Lopez – not to mention a country of all its citizens – Ahmad Abu Latif.

Elkana Vizel was a rabbi; Lopez was a father of three who made aliyah from Peru; Matan Lazar was a nurse; and Nir Binyamin was planning to propose to his long-time girlfriend.

All the dreams they had and all their hopes and aspirations died with them in Gaza. And the ripple effect of their deaths will impact thousands of people.

The worst one-day casualty count since the war began occurred after a brief relative lull in what had become a ghoulish daily ritual of waking up to the names of freshly slain soldiers and holding our breaths over whether we knew any of them personally.

Whether that lull was due to the IDF's touted 'stage 3' of lower intensity battle, which began a few weeks ago as troops

moved south toward Khan Yunis, or an aberration of good luck, the hopes that Hamas's capabilities were significantly weakening to the point that IDF casualties would trickle down were emphatically dashed.

The question now is: Are we in this for the long haul? Both government and military officials said at the outset that the Gaza war could take months or a year to achieve the goal of crushing Hamas and retrieving the hostages languishing in captivity. There were illusions that the cost would be high and that the IDF would suffer considerable casualties.

But now that we're on the way to four months in, the death count among soldiers is almost double that of the number of hostages still held; Hamas is still lethal, both in Gaza and in its ability to fire rockets at Israel; there's no plan for 'the day after' to speak of; and voices in the Knesset, on the street, and in the government are questioning if the war can achieve its aims. Israel is at a crossroads.

The Oct. 7 massacre is still a raw wound that will never fully heal, and the natural conclusion that Israel cannot allow those terrorists to continue governing Gaza is still a consensus opinion. The danger is when one of those begins to take over and dominate.

Those who say that Israel can't eliminate Hamas and get the hostages home from Gaza are growing in number, as are those who say that eradicating Hamas is a pipe dream. The families' frustration and alarm are also growing, and after that comes desperation. For now, the country has kept it together and is riding a fine line between logic and emotion.

Will the immense tragedy that came to light on Tuesday prove to be a tipping point in the war? And if it doesn't, how many more such days can we take until we crack? Let's pray that we don't have to find out.

21 IDF soldiers killed, others wounded as Hamas rockets detonate demolition bombs

Netanyahu, Gallant, Gantz all vow to continue war

• By YONAH JEREMY BOB and GADI ZAIG

Hamas forces fired rocket-propelled grenades on buildings laden with stored explosives, setting them off and causing a total collapse that killed 21 soldiers and injured several others on Monday.

The incident occurred around 4 p.m. in Maghazi in central Gaza, only 600 meters from the border fence close to Kissufim.

In addition, an IDF tank started to maneuver toward the attackers, the terrorists fired another RPG at the tank, which killing two soldiers and wounding two others.

There were other adjacent structures with soldiers and landmines which did not collapse.

The troops who were harmed were mostly reservists from Unit 8208, assigned to clear areas of dangerous items, such as mines, or in this case, to use the mines to destroy certain structures threatening future Israeli southern residents' security.

Rescue activities went on for hours, with the brigade commander on site from the start of the incident and the brigadier general in charge of the entire Gaza defense division arriving shortly after.

Late Tuesday, IDF Chief-of-Staff Lt.-Gen. Herzi Halevi flew down to the site from the northern border to view the situation firsthand. Halevi said, "The State of Israel woke up this morning to a painful and difficult update: 21 dead, among the best of our country who volunteered to defend their homeland."

He emphasized the need to continue the war to return

security to Israel's southern residents.

It was unclear what happened to the Hamas attackers, but IDF sources suggested they probably escaped.

The IDF is expected to probe how to avoid having such a large number of soldiers in one spot to avoid future mass casualties. At the same time, IDF sources said that it was technically safer for the soldiers to have been in the buildings than if they were waiting outside in the open and completely exposed.

The IDF released the names of the soldiers killed from the 8208 Battalion, 261st Brigade:

- Sgt.-Maj. (res.) Hadar Kapeluk, 23, from Moshav Mevo Beit
- Warr. Ofc. (res.) Sergey Gontmaher, 37, from Ramat Gan
- Sgt.-Maj. (res.) Elkana Yehuda Sfez, 25, from Kiryat Arba
- Master Sgt. (res.) Yoav Levi, 29, from the city of Yehud-Monoson in central Israel
- Sgt.-Maj. (res.) Nicholas Berger, 22, from Jerusalem
- Sgt.-Maj. (res.) Cydrick Garin, 23, from Tel Aviv-Yafo
- Sgt.-Maj. (res.) Ahmad Abu Latif, 26, from Rahat
- Capt. (res.) Nir Binyamin, 29, from Givatayim
- St.-Sgt.-Maj. Elkana Vizel, 35, from Bnei Dekalim
- Sgt.-Maj. (res.) Israel Socol, 24, from the Israeli settlement Karnei Shomron
- Sgt.-Maj. Sagi Idan, 24, from Rosh Haayin
- Warr. Ofc. Mark Kononovich, 35, from Herzliya
- Warr. Ofc. Shay Biton Hayun, 40, from Zichron Yaakov
- Warr. Ofc. Daniel Kasau



Zegeye, 38, from Yokneam

From the 6261 Battalion, 261st Brigade:

- Warr. Ofc. (res.) Matan Lazar, 32, from Haifa
- Warr. Ofc. (res.) Rafael Elias Mosheyoff, 33, from the town of Pardes Hanna-Karkur
- Warr. Ofc. (res.) Barak Haim Ben Valid, 33, from Rishon LeZion
- Warr. Ofc. Itamar Tal, 32, from Kibbutz Mesilot
- Warr. Ofc. Adam Bismuth, 35, from Karnei Shomron

From the 9206 Battalion, 205th Brigade:

- Sgt.-Maj. (res.) Yoav Lopez, 27, from Alon Shvut
- Capt. (res.) Ariel Mordechay Wollfistal, 28, from Elazar

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said, "Yesterday, we experienced one of the most difficult days since the outbreak of the war. The IDF has launched an investigation into the disaster. We must learn the necessary lessons and do everything to preserve the lives of our soldiers. In the name of our heroes, for the sake of our lives, we will not stop fighting until absolute victory."

President Isaac Herzog wrote that "behind every

name whose world has fallen apart – a family that we take to our hearts with sorrow and pain, and at the same time with pride – for the heroism of the generation."

Defense Minister Yoav Gallant stated, "On this difficult and painful morning, the most tragic news reached many homes in Israel; our hearts are with the dear families in their most difficult time. This is a war that will determine the future of Israel for decades to come. The fall of the fighters is a requirement to achieve the goals of the war. I send my condolences from the bottom of my heart to the families of the victims of the campaign and best wishes for a speedy recovery to the wounded."

Yesh Atid Leader Yair Lapid said that he "sends a hug to the families of the soldiers. The entire nation of Israel is with you in your difficult time. May their memory be a blessing."

National Unity Party Leader Benny Gantz said, "On this difficult morning, we must be united, remember the heavy price we are forced to pay for such a just war and the goal for which our heroes fell – to secure our future, to return our daughters and sons, and to take care of Israel forever. Especially today, we are sending strength to all IDF soldiers and their commanders. We are all behind you."

Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich described the incident as "heartbreaking news. Condolences from the bottom of my heart to the families of the heroes, the entire nation of Israel embraces you with a broken and aching heart. Our commitment is to ensure that the fall of our soldiers will not

be in vain."

National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir said, "Precisely now it is clearer than ever – the war must not be stopped, the fighting must not be reduced. We must continue to subdue, crush, and mow down the Nazi enemy in Gaza with all our might."

Knesset Speaker Amir Ohana said, "It's a difficult morning for the people of Israel to wake up to this heart-breaking news. On behalf of the Knesset, I would like to send my heartfelt condolences to the families of the fallen. Each of them is a world full of families, hopes, and dreams that were cut short prematurely. We all wish and pray for a speedy recovery of the wounded."

Agriculture Minister and security cabinet member Avi Dichter said, "Most of the soldiers were reservists, who left entire families without a father and an entire country shocked and in pain."

Far-left Hadash MK Ofer Cassif gives his "condolences to the families affected and best wishes for a speedy and full recovery to the wounded. Their blood is on the hands of this atrocious government that sacrifices masses just for its survival. They led us into the abyss, and they have no one to blame but themselves! They, in a messianic nightmare, ask for houses on the beach to be built on the corpses of soldiers, hostages, and thousands of Palestinians."

"There must be an uncompromising and fearless alternative in front of them that will stop the rivers of blood! A Jewish-Arab alternative of justice, equality, and peace. These criminals must leave already! Elections now!"



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