



By: TA | AP Insight

Investigation or cover-up - outrage in Israel due to the investigation of responsibility for the attack on October 7



After repeated delays, Israel's government has agreed to launch an investigation into the government failures that led to the Hamas-led attack on Oct. 7, 2023, that triggered the war in Gaza.

But questions about the investigation's independence drew accusations Monday that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is trying to evade **personal responsibility** in the worst attack in Israel's history.

Israel has traditionally appointed an independent state commission of inquiry, led by a retired judge, following major governmental failures.

Netanyahu has resisted calls for such an investigation into the Oct. 7 failures, saying only that he would answer all questions when the war is over.

In Sunday's decision, he said the ceasefire that went into effect on Oct. 10 allows the government to start the investigation.

His Cabinet approved the formation of a watered-down "government committee." Netanyahu will oversee the makeup of the team governing the inquiry, in effect putting him in charge of the probe.

More details about the inquiry are to be announced in 45 days.

Public criticism

Israel's opposition leader, Yair Lapid, called the decision insulting to the victims of Oct. 7 and to the hundreds of soldiers who have died in the war.

"The government is doing everything it can to run from the truth and evade responsibility," Lapid said.

The government is "establishing a commission that will investigate itself," noted the Movement for Quality Government in Israel, which is critical of Netanyahu. "This is not an investigative commission, this is a cover-up

commission."

In the Oct. 7 attack, Hamas-led militants killed some 1,200 people and took over 250 others hostage. Nearly 500 soldiers have been killed in fighting since then, while Palestinian health officials say over 69,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's retaliatory offensive against Hamas.

Nearly three-quarters of the public support a fully independent commission of inquiry

According to a poll by the Jerusalem-based think tank Israel Democracy Institute last month, nearly three-quarters of the public support a fully independent commission of inquiry.

Even among Netanyahu's right-wing base, 68% favored an independent commission. The survey questioned 1,000 people and had a margin of error of 3.1 percentage points.

Thousands of people demonstrated on Saturday night in Tel Aviv, many calling for an independent probe.

Netanyahu, who is on trial for corruption charges unrelated to the war, says Israel's judiciary has too much power and has asserted that an independent inquiry would not have "the broadest possible public support."

"The only way to ensure public trust in the work of the commission is broad agreement regarding the composition of the commission," he said.

Previous findings

The Israeli military and other security bodies have conducted a number of investigations into their failures on Oct. 7.

But the new investigation also will look at governmental decision-making and

assumptions that created the conditions for the attack to occur.



An Israeli military investigation determined that a central misconception was that Hamas was more interested in governing the territory than fighting Israel

Many security figures have said that Netanyahu's attempt to overhaul the country's **judicial system**, which triggered mass demonstrations and public divisions before the war, sent a message of weakness that encouraged Israel's enemies to attack. Netanyahu rejects the accusations.

Many Israelis believe the mistakes of Oct. 7 extend beyond the military, and they blame Netanyahu for what they view as a failed strategy of deterrence and containment in the years before the attack.

That strategy included allowing Qatar to send **suitcases of cash** into Gaza and sidelining Hamas' rival, the internationally recognized Palestinian Authority.

An Israeli military investigation determined that a central misconception was that Hamas, which seized control of Gaza from the Palestinian Authority in 2007, was more interested in governing the territory than fighting Israel.

The probe also found that Hamas was able to carry out the Oct. 7 attack because the more powerful Israeli army misjudged the militant group's intentions and underestimated its capabilities.

Military planners had envisioned that, at worst, Hamas could stage a ground invasion from up to eight border points, but Hamas had

more than 60 attack routes on Oct. 7.

Many **high-ranking officers** in the military and security establishment at the time, including the military chief of staff, the head of military intelligence and the defense minister, have resigned or been forced out.