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## **Screaming Soldiers and Open Revolt: How One Video Unmasked Israel's Internal Power Struggle**



Image by Tahir Osman.

A seemingly strange choice was made by a correspondent for Israel's Channel 12 when he decided, on April 22, to publish one of the most humiliating videos of a relatively large number of Israeli soldiers coming under attack by a single Palestinian fighter.

As soldiers stumbled down the stairs of a building in Khan Yunis, southern Gaza, chaos erupted: some fell over each other, others hid behind a concrete wall, and some even fired erratically, endangering their own colleagues.

This begs the question: given the Israeli media's frequent adherence to strict, often unreasonable, military censorship, what motivated the decision to release such a damaging portrayal of its own soldiers?

The answer lies in the open war between the Israeli political institution, represented by the leadership of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on the one hand, and the rest of the country on the other.

The 'rest of the country' may seem to be an elusive concept, but it is not. Currently, Netanyahu is at war with the military institution, the internal intelligence agency Shin Bet, the judiciary, much of the media, and the majority of Israelis who want the war to end and Israeli captives to be released.

This explains the unprecedented and open criticism by former top Israeli officials who are accusing Netanyahu of being a danger, not only to the Israeli military and Israeli society, but also to the future of Israel itself.

On April 21, the chief of the Shin Bet, Ronen Bar, crossed every protocol when he presented Israel's Supreme Court with two documents, one of which was revealed to the public.

According to Israeli media, in the unclassified affidavit, Bar stated that he was fired "because of his refusal to meet those expectations of loyalty", particularly "regarding investigations into the prime minister's aides" and for "his refusal to help Netanyahu avoid testifying in his criminal trial".

Bar's comments represented not only a fundamental historical shift in how Israel's power players treat extremely sensitive security matters, but also were, essentially, a call for the overthrow of Netanyahu.

The former head of the Shin Bet, Nadav Argaman, has been equally vocal, although he was the first to speak about Netanyahu's transgressions, suggesting clear coordination between the various elements of Israel's notorious and powerful intelligence.

"If the prime minister acts unlawfully, I will say everything I know," he told Israel's Channel 12 last month.

The coordination runs deeper, with former Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, who, along with Netanyahu, is wanted by the International Criminal Court, going on his own rampage on April 23.

Aside from the direct attacks on Netanyahu, calling his policy a "moral disgrace", he seems to disparage the Israeli military itself, revealing that Israel, last August, faked pictures of an alleged Hamas tunnel in order to prevent a ceasefire agreement.

The Israeli government used this specific episode as its rationale for maintaining control over the Philadelphi Corridor in southern Gaza, a justification that emerged around the same time

as the deeply embarrassing video of Israeli soldiers running in terror from a lone combatant. The layers of humiliation continued to accumulate.

While Gallant's actions may discredit the military and his own leadership, his primary aim appears to be impacting Netanyahu, who many Israelis view as prolonging the Gaza war for personal political gain.

Israel's actual war losses are another key point. One of Israel's historically best-kept secrets is its losses in war against Arab armies or resistance. Its casualties in the current war on Gaza were also supposed to be a well-kept secret, except that it is not.

Though the Israeli army has tried to minimize its death toll since the start of the war on October 7, 2023, it has faced many leaks, some initiated by the military itself. The aim? To put pressure on Netanyahu to end the war, especially in light of new information that at least half of Israel's military reserves are refusing to return to the battlefield.

Interestingly, it was Eyal Zamir, Netanyahu's hand-picked replacement for Herzi Halevi, the former chief of staff, who surprised everyone in a speech shortly after his appointment last February. Zamir revealed that 5,942 Israeli families had "joined the list of bereaved families" in 2024.

Zamir, who had already committed that "2025 will be a year of war," seems less inclined now to escalate the war beyond Israel's ability to sustain it.

The war between Israel's political, military, and intelligence elites has never been so ugly, let alone open, as if both sides have reached the conclusion that their survival—and the survival of Israel itself—is dependent on defeating the other camp.

After some reluctance and relatively careful choice of words, Gallant has now joined the chorus of a powerful group of ex-officials who want to see Netanyahu out of power by any means necessary, including civil disobedience.

This internal conflict among Israel's elite marks a departure from its long-cultivated image. For decades, Israel presented itself as a beacon of democracy and civilization amidst what it portrayed as less cultured neighbors. However, the Gaza genocide has shattered this falsified narrative.

Consequently, the current infighting among the very architects of this Israeli fantasy now offers an unprecedented opportunity to uncover deeper truths—not only about the ongoing war in Gaza but also about Israel's history, from its establishment on the land of historic Palestine to the ongoing genocide, nearly eight decades later.

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