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The Judicial Reform in Israel: the Spark that Led to the October 7th War

Abstract: In the center of the Middle East, surrounded by millions of hostile Arabs, the best way to guarantee its existence Israel must project an image of an invincible power to deter its enemies from attacking. This is the main component of Israel's security concept. However, On October 7, 2023, it seemed that Israel lost its deterrence when Hamas, joined by other Islamic terror groups, launched a surprise attack, including firing rockets, brutal raids of fighters, and kidnapping hostages. Although Israel has a strong and sophisticated army with technological superiority, the Islamic organizations felt confident launching the attack. This paper aims to explore the factors that encouraged Hamas and the Islamic resistance front to go on the attack. The October 7th attack came after ten turbulent months characterized by civil protests, strikes, and demonstrations of thousands of Israelis who struggled against the intentions of Netanyahu's government to change the Judicial system. A study of public statements given by Islamic leaders can shed light on the mindset of radical Islamic organizations. The central claim is that Hamas and the Islamic groups perceived the civil struggle in Israel as the fulfillment of the religious vision written in the Quran. The conclusion is that Israel's military power is not enough to maintain deterrence and project power toward Islamic organizations, but social cohesion is needed, too.

Key words: Israel politics, civil protest, october 7th war, Hamas; Hizballah, Iran, religious thinking, spider web conception

Introduction

On the morning of October 7, 2023, the Palestinian Islamic terrorist organizations launched a surprise attack against Israel. The attack, called "Al Aqsa Flood," included the firing of rockets and a raid by 3,000 fighters, who broke through from Gaza towards the nearby kibbutzim and towns. Fueled by religious fervor, Hamas fighters committed horrific crimes of brutal murder, burning houses, raping, and kidnapping civilians who were transported back to Gaza. In the first 48 hours, Hamas fighters murdered 1,145 people, injured over 1,900, and took 253 hostages. Soon after, the other Islamic organizations joined to assist Hamas in its war against Israel. The Hezbollah and the pro-Iranian militias launched anti-tank missiles and rockets from Lebanon and Syria toward the Galilee and the Golan Heights. The Houthis attacked Eilat with cruise missiles and blocked the shipping lanes in the Red Sea. Iran itself set a precedent when it directly attacked Israel with hundreds of ballistic missiles (Ledur et al., 2024). The surprise attack caught Israel complacent and unprepared, as it shattered the agreed-upon basic premise regarding its security concept, including that Israel's military strength and technological advantages are sufficient to deter the Islamic terrorist organizations from attacking it. What is the cause of the self-confidence that led the Islamic organizations

to attack Israel, which is considered superior to them militarily? What is the reason for the timing of the attack, precisely after the establishment of the most right-wing and religious government in Israel? The purpose of this paper is to examine the internal processes that occurred in Israel the year before the October 7th attack, which could have encouraged the Islamic organizations to make that decision. The central claim is that the internal struggle over judicial reform in Israel encouraged the Islamic groups to launch the brutal attack because they saw this as the fulfillment of a religious vision. A study of the statements given by the Islamic leaders in the months before the attack allows us to understand the way they saw the struggle against Israel and the interpretation they ascribed to the political disputes in it.

Israel's national security concept

Israel's security concept is based on the premise that it is in a situation of immediate existential danger. This assumption is a starting point in both military doctrine and foreign policy, and it is deeply rooted in the mindset of the Israeli public. This view of reality is the outcome of a hundred years of conflict between the Jewish community and the Arab world. Israel's security concept formed at the beginning of the 20th century, with the start of the Jewish settlement in the Land of Israel. The violent attacks of the Arabs against the Jews in 1921 led to the conclusion that it was necessary to build an independent defense force that could stand up to the intentions of the Arabs (Eisenkot, Siboni, 2019, p. 16). After the establishment of the State, the security principles were constructed by David Ben-Gurion, the first prime minister, and approved by the government in 1953 (Shabtai, 2010, p. 8). The security concept can be characterized by the image of an "Iron Wall." The "Iron Wall" concept assumes that acceptance of the existence of the State of Israel will be achieved only if the Arabs conclude that their war efforts are useless and cause them harm. The military strategy to create this "Iron Wall" is based mainly on deterrence.

Deterrence is the threat of action to prevent the enemy from doing something he had intended by warning to inflict pain and suffering (Schelling, Slaughter, 2020, p. 70). Israel must present to the Arab world an image of power so that the price of a military confrontation against it will be painful and unprofitable for anyone who dares. The way to create a deterrent image despite the differences in size compared to the Arab world is by building a high-quality army. This army of reserves is composed of civilians at the state's disposal whenever needed. It will benefit from the high motivation and belief in the fighting goals, incorporate advanced technology, and receive rigorous training, giving it superiority over the Arab armies (Horowitz, 1983, p. 15). However, for the fear of pain to have an impact, it is necessary to know what scares the other side (Schelling, Slaughter, 2020, p. 3). According to Yitzchak Rabin, the fifth prime minister of Israel, the greatest fear of the Arab leaders is the loss of power. Therefore, Israel's threat towards the Arab countries is directed at the stability and integrity of their regimes. Military strength is not sufficient if the other side does not perceive it as such. The effectiveness of deterrence depends on the enemy's image towards the threat and on rational considerations of the worthwhileness of the attack compared to the damage that may be caused

to the attacker. The problem is that cultural differences can influence the interpretation of reality, and things you see from here are not necessarily seen from there. In addition, sometimes, feelings of hostility and frustration prevail over rational assessments of profit and loss. Since Israel cannot know at every given moment how its enemies perceive it, it must be alert and always prepared for war. If deterrence fails and war still breaks out, Israel must decide the battle quickly and unequivocally. The tactic is to move the war into the territory of the Arab countries and to respond powerfully in such a way that the regimes will lose assets.

Israel's strategic characteristics are not in its favor. Its positions in political and geographical isolation, its poor natural resources, and its difficulty holding on during war. Therefore, Ben-Gurion estimated that Israel must have at least one world power by its side, which will give it military support, be able to help economically and provide diplomatic backing in the international arena (Rodman, 2001, p. 80). Until 1967, Israel had developed special relations with France. Since then, Israel has maintained a close and intimate alliance with the United States and prioritizes American interests in the region (Medzini, 2010, p. 91). The year 1979 can be noted as the watershed in Israel's security reality. The first peace agreement with Egypt was signed this year, and the conventional military threat was removed. After four wars and heavy losses, Arab countries reconciled with Israel's existence. Conversely, that year, the Islamic revolution that occurred in Iran generated the most danger, threatening its security. Iran's effort to export the revolution caused it to deploy a new type of fighting: terrorism through proxies. The change in the enemies and the manner of the fighting forced Israel to update its security concept and adjust it to the new threats: the firing of missiles and unconventional weapons (Meridor, Eldadi, 2018, p. 14).

The Islamic resistance front

From the beginning of Jewish settlement in the Land of Israel until today, the Arab-Israeli conflict has passed through several stages, when in every, another dimension was added, which had an impact on the motivation of the fighting and the chance of a solution. The first stage began as a struggle between two national movements on the land: Zionism and the Palestinian national movement. In the 1950s, the conflict expanded and was perceived in a broader context of a global struggle between pan-Arab nationalism and Israel as the representative of Western imperialism. The defeat of the Arab countries in their war against Israel undermined the pan-Arab revolutionaries, and the aspiration for Islamic unity evolved. The religious awakening that the Middle East has experienced since the 1970s has given the conflict a new meaning as an age-old struggle between two absolute conceptions of truth: Islam versus Judaism (Litvak, 1998, p. 148). Indications of political Islam manifested in the form of radical religious movements appeared as early as the 19th century as a reaction to Western culture. The penetration of the European powers into the region caused the local population to encounter modernity and cracked the traditional social order. The superiority of the West, illustrated by military, scientific, and technology, caused feelings of humiliation and sparked the motivation to hurt back (Shay, 2003, p. 21). From the point of view of the fundamentalist movements, the reason

for the inferior condition of the Arabs lies in the population's distance from the culture of Islam. According to them, the solution is to return to the golden age of the 7th century and establish a religious and social order based on the laws of Islam. This approach is the cultural and psychological foundation that drives the fundamentalist organizations and explains their behavior, as expressed in the slogan "Islam is the answer."

Even if the organizations of political Islam began earlier, the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979 was a turning point in the activities of the Islamic movements. The overthrow of the pro-Western secular regime was seen as proof of the supremacy of Islam and an illustration that the establishment of an Islamic State through struggle is indeed an attainable goal. Iran directs the greatest hostility towards the State of Israel, which, in its view, is the main obstacle preventing Islamic unity. The one who made hostility to Israel the main component of the Islamic ideology was Ayatollah Khomeini (Litvak, 2004, p. 373). Khomeini referred to the State of Israel in the same way that the Jews are mentioned in the Quran, as the enemies of the Prophet Muhammad who deny the divine truth. According to Islamic organizations, Israel is a multi-dimensional threat, and the duty to fight it derives from two main reasons. On the religious level, Israel is the State of the Jews, who are seen as infidels, enemies of Islam, and even enemies of humanity. Moreover, Israel was established on land that was taken from the Muslims and held in its hands the holy places of Islam, the Al Aqsa Mosque foremost. On the cultural level, Israel is part of the Western world led by the United States. It is an imperial agent rooted in the heart of the Middle East and aims at eliminating Islamic culture (Litvak, 2008, p. 65). Iran's efforts to spread the revolution led it to establish a resistance front that included Islamic terrorist organizations. The two main parties – Hezbollah and Hamas, coordinate their activities with Iran and often serve as an executive arm to promote its goals in the region.

Lebanon was chosen to be the first destination for the export of the Islamic revolution. The combination of a prominent *Shiite* population and an unstable political structure made it easy for Iran to penetrate, intending to create a political order in its image (Shapira, 2000, p. 98). The first stage was the creation of an ideological infrastructure among the Shiite Muslims in Lebanon. The task was assigned to the "Revolutionary Guards," which started a development boom in the Shiite areas. The revolutionary message was assimilated in a fertile ground of social and economic hardships and attracted hundreds of desperate young Muslims who developed animosity towards the United States and Israel. The second step was to build military *Shia* units. According to Hezbollah's ideological platform written in 1985, the organization's goal is to defend against the attack initiated by the United States and its ally Israel against the Islamic nation (Kurtz, Burgin, 1993, p. 33).

During his studies at *Ain Shams* University in Cairo, Ahmed Yassin, a Palestinian preacher from the *Shatti* refugee camp in Gaza, was exposed to the teachings of Hassan al-Bana and joined the Muslim Brotherhood. The Muslim Brotherhood aims to fight against Western culture by guiding the population to an Islamic way of life. The Islamic members believe that the condition for launching a holy war (*ji had*) is the transformation of Arab society into Islam in all aspects of society. Accordingly, it invests most of its efforts in activities that invite the population to join the religious lifestyle (*al dawah*) (Hatina, Kupferschmidt, 2012, p. 17). In 1973, Ahmed Yassin founded the Palestinian branch

of the Muslim Brotherhood, called the Islamic Association (*Mujama al Islamia*). The activity of the Islamic Association was accompanied by a mass movement of a return to religiosity among the Palestinian population (Hackham, 2006, p. 11). In parallel, the rise of the *Likud* party in 1977 and the strengthening of the religious right-wing bloc in Israel helped establish the understanding among the Palestinians that the struggle against Israel is religious (Shaked, Shabi, 1994, p. 61). The decision to join the path of fighting was made in December 1987, a few days after the popular uprising (*intifada*) outbreak. The sight of young Palestinians who are not afraid to confront Israel's soldiers aroused great enthusiasm and was seen as a sign of divine intervention. At a special meeting, Ahmed Yassin decided the conditions were ripe for establishing the Islamic resistance movement – *Hamas* (Aviad, 2014, p. 15). According to Hamas, the land of Palestine has special holiness, and therefore, Islamic unity is not possible without first liberating the land of Palestine. This approach transforms the struggle for the liberation of Palestine into a religious obligation and sees the death of the Muslim fighter, the martyr (*Shahid*), as the highest ideal. Moreover, the clerics of Hamas have turned the *jihād* into a religious commandment of importance equal to the five pillars of Islam while stating that any person who dies without participating in the holy war is considered an apostate (Litvak, 2012, p. 220). In the year 1989, Hamas began to carry out terrorist acts against Israel, thereby joining the Islamic resistance front.

The judicial reform in Israel

On Wednesday, January 4, 2023, a few days after establishing the new government in Israel, the Minister of Justice, Yariv Levin, published his plan for reforming the judicial system. Yariv Levin, known for his hostility towards the Supreme Court, justified his decision based on the need to strengthen Israeli democracy, which he asserted had lost the balance between the authorities. The proposed reform consisted of five sections:

1. The committee that chooses justices will be changed in composition, and representatives appointed by the Minister of Justice will be included.
2. The legislation of the “overcoming clause” law will allow the *Knesset* (Israel's Parliament) to override the decisions of the Supreme Court with a simple majority.
3. The limitation of the ability of the Supreme Court to invalidate the laws of the *Knesset*.
4. The elimination of the possibility of using the legal principle of “reasonableness.”
5. The attorney generals in government offices are transformed into positions of trust appointed by the minister (Zimuki, 2023).

Although the reform was presented as a move to strengthen Israeli democracy, the actual meaning was the opposite: the weakening of the power of the Supreme Court and the removal of any restrictions on the government. If all the sections are approved, Israel may find itself sliding towards an autocratic regime, where the government has unlimited power, and there will be no authority that can restrain it. In the first weeks, the government devoted all its time to only one issue – promoting judicial reform. This was expressed in intensive discussions in *Knesset* committees, the reduction of the right of the opposition members to speak, and the continuation of meetings around the clock,

all to advance the legislation without delays and as quickly as possible. It is necessary to review the new government's composition to understand the motivation behind the judicial reform and the urgency behind its advancement. After three years of instability in Israel, during which five elections were held, Benjamin Netanyahu won in November 2022. To establish his government at any cost, Netanyahu agreed to add to his coalition, apart from the Ultra-Orthodox parties, also the two far-right parties: "*HaZiyonut Ha-Datit*" (Religious Zionism) and "*Otzma Yehudit*" (Jewish Power), when he is willing to fulfill all their demands. Besides ensuring right-wing rule for years to come, the purpose of the judicial reform was to protect the political recompense promised to the coalition parties, remuneration that the Supreme Court would have probably invalidated. Netanyahu is accused of accepting bribes and fraud, and he wants to replace the Attorney General and cancel his trial. The ultra-Orthodox parties want to receive unequal budgets for *yeshiva* students and to exempt them from the duty of military service. The far-right parties are interested in directing budgets into settlements in the territories of Judea and Samaria and in legalizing illegal outposts. The only obstacle that could stand in the way of the right-wing religious coalition is the Supreme Court. Therefore, it was necessary to neutralize its power through judicial reform.

As a response to the government's intentions, an unprecedented public protest began to grow on the part of citizens who saw the judicial reform as an immediate danger to Israeli democracy. Protests occurred at significant intersections, along roads, in front of politicians' houses, and in front of the Knesset. In 40 weeks of protest, about 7 million citizens participated in 4,400 protest sites (Glikman, 2023). The civil struggle against the government's intentions swept after other sectors of society when each tried to pressure the government to reverse course.

The financial sector was the first to respond to the legislative initiatives. Fearing that the judicial reform would drive away foreign investors and lower Israel's credit rating, the governor of the Bank of Israel and about 300 of Israel's senior economists warned against the legislation and called to stop the reform (Eilat, 2023). In April, the forecast for Israel's credit rating was indeed lowered. In addition, the fear of harm to democratic values and the pluralistic environment led the high-tech companies to undertake more aggressive steps. Investment funds threatened to withdraw their money from Israel, high-tech companies announced that they would transfer their activity to other countries, and workers threatened to emigrate if the judicial reform advances. Data published by Start-Up Nation Central in July 2023 indicate that the government's persistence in advancing the reform led high-tech companies to realize their threats. According to the report, 68% of the high-tech companies already started with financial and legal steps to remove their capital outside of Israel, 37% of the investment funds removed their money, 8% of the companies changed the registration of their location, and 29% reported that they intend to do so soon (Start-Up Nation Central, 2023). The expected effect of the judicial reform on the health system also led the doctors to join the civil protest. A few days after the judicial reform was launched, the "White Coats" organization was formed. This organization, which brings together thousands of doctors and health system workers, aims to fight against the planned judicial reform. The most dramatic event in which all the sectors of the economy cooperated against the government occurred on March 27, 2023. The head of the Workers' Union, Arnon Bar David, announced a general shutdown

of the economy without a time limit until the judicial reform was stopped (Kotev et al., 2023). Despite the government's attempts to dismiss the impact of the judicial reform on the economy, it seems that during the ten months, the strength of the Israeli economy was indeed damaged. Israel's credit rating was lowered, the shekel weakened, high-tech companies and investors began withdrawing their money, and many doctors sought positions in other countries.

The idea of a "people's army" that merges all parts of Israeli society is a central element of the Zionist ethos. Feelings of shared destiny, the spirit of volunteerism, and high motivation have often been presented as factors responsible for the strength of the IDF (Israel Defense Force). The government's plans to change the judicial system managed to harm even the element that is perceived as the most sacred of Israeli society. The reservists of the Naval Commando were the first to protest, joined by those of the elite combat units who threatened that they would not report to reserve duty until the government froze the legislative processes (Bohbot, 2023). The Air Force pilots, the IDF's long-range arm, declared that they would not be willing to serve under a dictatorship and also announced the cessation of training. The spread of protests in the army led the heads of the security system to initiate an urgent meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu and warn him against the army's disintegration and severe damage to operational competence (Yehoshua, 2023a). Netanyahu's disregard of the warnings led Defense Minister Yoav Gallant on March 25, 2023, to issue a public call against judicial reform. The next day, Gallant's dismissal by Netanyahu only intensified the public's fears that their security was in danger. As the legislation progressed, so did the number of reservists who stopped reporting for duty. During July 2023, the members of the senior command of the security forces joined the protest. In a letter sent to the government, about 100 heads of Mossad, heads of the Shin Bet, chiefs of staff, and major generals in the reserves signed that they would end up volunteering for the army (Wasserman, 2023).

The establishment of Netanyahu's new coalition was met with manifested hostility by the American administration. President Biden did not rush to congratulate Netanyahu on his victory in the elections, and contrary to the usual practice, he refused to invite him to the White House (Gilboa, 2023). In an interview with the CNN network, Biden expressed concern that the present Israeli government is the most extreme, he recalls (Zakaria, 2023). The intimate cooperation that characterized the relationship between the two countries was also damaged, and for five months, Biden refrained from talking to Netanyahu. Some Israeli ministers were considered undesirable persons and were not granted working meetings with their counterparts in the American administration. The advancement of judicial reform further deepened the crisis between the two governments and even led to the exchange of harsh mutual statements. In several statements to the media, President Biden said that he is worried about judicial reform and emphasized that shared democratic values must remain at the basis of an alliance between the two countries (Eichner, 2023). The attempts to forcibly suppress the civil protest led the American administration to publish a statement usually reserved for autocratic regimes about the government's duty to preserve the right to protest. Conversely, the backing of the United States of the protesters caused some Israeli ministers to express themselves strongly against it and even personally attack President Biden. The most tangible expression of

Israel's declining status was the attitude shown towards it at the United Nations Assembly in September 2023. Netanyahu was not invited to the White House, and President Biden allotted only one hour for the meeting on the assembly's sidelines (Shemesh, Masuade, 2023). The ideology of the right-wing government and the planned judicial reform led Israel in ten months to jeopardize its special relationship with the world power, its ally, a trend that did not go unnoticed by the players in the Middle East.

Of the many effects of the judicial reform, the most serious, the one seen as a danger to the existence of the State of Israel, even in the eyes of its enemies, was the damage to social cohesion. The struggle for judicial reform ignited strong feelings of anger, rage, pride, and violence, far beyond the question of the status of the Supreme Court because it allowed deep currents to break through to the surface and expose the fault line that cuts through Israeli society, about the desired identity of the State: Jewish vs. democratic. The protest spilled into the streets as camps of protesters began to line up against each other. In *Bnei Brak*, an ultra-Orthodox city that represents the nature of the coalition, thousands of secular Israelis demonstrated in protest of inequality and the intent to harm democracy (Sela, 2023). Pro-reform citizens blocked entrances of kibbutzim, which was identified with the public protest in retaliation for the mass demonstrations (E. Harel, 2023). Netanyahu's right-wing coalition inflamed the struggle by branding the demonstrators as privileged anarchists and representatives of the elites who are not ready to accept the will of the people (Fox, 2023). "You are not second-class citizens," Netanyahu told his supporters in organized demonstrations to channel their anger toward the public protest (Kotev, 2023). Even on Remembrance Day for the Fallen of the IDF, which is considered a sacred day in society, there were sharp clashes in the cemeteries between bereaved families around the issue of judicial reform. Slowly, the clashes turned violent as the supporters of the reform tried by force to interfere with the public protest. The Minister of Internal Security, Itamar Ben Gvir, encouraged the police to use force against the demonstrators, drivers tried to run over the demonstrators, and there were several cases where citizens threatened with weapons in order to suppress the protest (Blumenthal et al., 2023). Ten months after Justice Minister Yariv Lavin's initiative, Israel found itself with a declining economy and a disintegrating military, without the support of the United States, and socially polarized. There is no doubt that to the outside world, Israel was seen as a country in a severe crisis, without all the assets that characterized it as a regional power and at its most vulnerable.

The spider web conception

On May 26, 2000, a day after the withdrawal of the IDF from southern Lebanon, Hassan Nasrallah, Secretary General of Hezbollah, delivered a speech in which he celebrated the withdrawal. The speech, which was nicknamed the "Spider Web Speech," revealed how the Islamic Resistance Front evaluates the power balance in the struggle against Israel. Nasrallah compared Israel's strength to a spider web. Israel may appear to be a formidable military power, but in fact, it is a weak entity and easy to defeat. This view of reality is based on a verse from the Quran that promises victory to Muslims over the infidels.

“The parable of those who take protectors other than Allah is that of a spider spinning a shelter, and the flimsiest of all shelters is certainly that of a spider if only then new.” (Surah 29, Verse 41).

Clifford Geertz defines religion as a symbolic structure that generates meaning for people, a worldview capable of answering human problems, and an ethos telling people how they should act. Religion simplifies the chaotic reality into a comprehensible cosmic order by imposing lifestyles and moral attitudes on humans. It establishes social processes that shape the behavior and gives its believers both a vision and an action plan for its fulfillment (Geertz, 1973, p. 90). Almost every phenomenon that Islamic organizations encounter is processed through Islam's ingredients. The successes are a reward for walking in God's way; for unbelievers, nothing awaits but painful defeat. Like the Jews mentioned in the Quran, Israeli society is seen as morally weak and lacking the strength required to fight against the Muslims, so its defeat is only a matter of time. Every confrontation with Israel, regardless of its results, only strengthens the religious narrative and is seen as another step towards the completion of the victory. Hezbollah interprets the unilateral withdrawal of the IDF from southern Lebanon in 2000 as a step of cowardice and flight on the part of a society that recoils from struggle (Shapira, 2000, p. 207).

Similarly, Hamas saw the outbreak of the *intifada* in 1987 as a divine sign of the beginning of the *jihad* for the return of the holy places of Islam (Litvak, 1998, p. 158). Hamas rejects the claim that Israel is strong and is convinced that their devotion to religion is a guarantee of victory. Ahmed Yassin goes as far as the story of the exodus from Egypt and the struggle of the Israelites against *Pharaoh* in order to prove that military power is not a guarantee in the face of God's power. In the first weeks after the judicial reform was launched, the Islamic organizations closely followed what was happening inside Israel. A study of their public statements reveals that how they interpreted the civil struggle was commensurate with the conception of the spider web rooted in their understanding. The spokesman for Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that this is another crisis occurring in the spider web, and the Zionist entity is about to be scattered by the wind (Berdichevsky, 2023). Hassan Nasrallah stated in several interviews that Israel is facing a civil war, and the collapse of the Zionist entity is a matter of time (Berdichevsky, 2023). The official newspaper of the Hamas movement published a commentary article on the fact that Israel is suffering from decline and degeneration and is in its last days before its destruction (Halevy, 2023). In July 2023, after the first section of the judicial reform was approved by the Knesset and the civil struggle reached its peak, Nasrallah stated that this was the worst day in Israel's history and that it was moving on a path toward disappearance (Salama, 2023). Closer cooperation was seen when Hamas leaders arrived in Tehran at the end of July 2023 to discuss the implications of the reform on the resistance front and to coordinate the desired response (Gridwall, 2023). Palestinian businessmen who fled Gaza said that the Hamas leader, Yahya Sinwar, is in religious euphoria and believes that the attack on Israel on October 7 is part of the “last promise” (*Waed Al-Harra*) mentioned in the Quran. The belief of the Hamas leadership in their victory was so great that even before the attack, it appointed governors on its behalf for various regions of Israel (Eldar, 2024). The increase in the self-confidence of the Islamic resistance organizations had not gone unnoticed by Israel's security officials. The IDF's intelligence delivered four warning letters to Prime Minister Netanyahu regarding the

implications of the judicial reform on the country's security. The intelligence reports state that there has been severe erosion of the IDF's deterrence capability, and the Islamic terrorist organizations recognize a historic opportunity to attack Israel and change the strategic situation in the region (Yehoshua, 2023b). The insistence of Netanyahu's government to pursue judicial reform despite the price it exacts on Israeli society and the religious interpretation that the Islamic organizations gave to the civil protest in a democratic country ultimately led to the violent attack of October 7.

Conclusions

The projected power of a country and how its enemies perceive it depends not only on its arsenal of weapons or military capabilities but also on the degree of cohesion of the society and the solidarity that its citizens exhibit towards one another. Ten months of civil struggle deepened the tensions between the groups in society and weakened the feeling of mutual responsibility. The character of Israel as a Jewish and democratic State was defined in the Declaration of Independence. On the one hand, Israel is a country that preserves Jewish culture and serves as a home for all the Jews of the world. On the other hand, Israel is a modern country committed to universal values of freedom and social equality. The Jewish and Democratic values of the State are the pillars of the collective identity and receive broad consensus in society. As befits the core elements of the State, they are rooted in the education system and anchored in the legislation and rulings of Israeli law. In a heterogeneous society like Israel, democracy allows the different groups to maintain their uniqueness and make their voices heard. Through democracy, citizens participate in politics and strengthen their sense of belonging to the State. The values of democracy provide moral support to soldiers in times of war, and they allow Israel to belong to the exclusive club of democratic countries in the world. Just as harming the Jewish character of the State may undermine the cohesion of society, so too can violation of its Democratic character. A report by the outgoing Chief of Staff, Gadi Eisenkot, on the concept of national security presents an assessment of the constellation of dangers that threaten Israel. The terrorist organizations, so it is written in a report that almost predicted what happened, identify the cohesion of Israeli society as the weak point and therefore strive to increase the tensions in it through violent actions, assuming this will lead Israel to withdraw from its territory (Eisenkot, 2019, p. 31). The way to deal with such a threat is to project social cohesion and national resilience to the enemies. Therefore, the report recommends preserving the values of the State as Jewish and Democratic and strengthening the citizens' feelings of belonging. More than once, ideological movements such as radical Islamic organizations encounter the need to reconcile between pure ideological aspirations and political reality. The existence of a strong army and a cohesive society could have put limits on the ideological vision or at least postponed it to the future. The picture that emerged as a result of the civil struggle in Israel strengthened the ideological component in decision-making and motivated the Islamic resistance front to go on the offensive out of blind faith in the religious vision. Democracy is not only the rules of a political system but also the values that are part of social identity, and therefore, ensuring Israel's democratic character should also be part of the national security component.

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Reforma sądownictwa w Izraelu: iskra, która doprowadziła do wojny 7 października

Streszczenie

W centrum Bliskiego Wschodu, otoczony milionami wrogich Arabów, Izrael musi projektować wizerunek niezwyciężonej potęgi, aby odstraszyć swoich przeciwników od ataków i zagwarantować swoje istnienie. To główny składnik koncepcji bezpieczeństwa Izraela. Jednak 7 października 2023 roku wydawało się, że Izrael stracił swoją zdolność odstraszenia, gdy Hamas, wsparty przez inne islamskie grupy terrorystyczne, przeprowadził niespodziewany atak, w tym odpalenie rakiet, brutalne napady bojowników i porwanie zakładników. Pomimo że Izrael dysponuje silną i zaawansowaną armią z przewagą technologiczną, organizacje islamskie czuły się pewne rozpoczęcia ataku. Niniejsza praca ma na celu zbadanie czynników, które zachęciły Hamas i front islamskiego oporu do przeprowadzenia ataku. Atak z 7 października nastąpił po dziesięciu burzliwych miesiącach, charakteryzujących się protestami społecznymi, strajkami i demonstracjami tysięcy Izraelczyków, którzy sprzeciwiali się planom rządu Netanjahu zmian w systemie sądowym. Badanie publicznych oświadczeń liderów islamskich może rzucić światło na mentalność radykalnych organizacji islamskich. Główny wniosek jest taki, że Hamas i grupy islamskie postrzegały wewnętrzne konflikty w Izraelu jako spełnienie wizji religijnej zawartej w Koranie. Okazało się, że siła militarna Izraela nie wystarcza do utrzymania odstraszenia i projekcji siły wobec organizacji islamskich, potrzebna jest również spójność społeczna.

Słowa kluczowe: polityka Izraela, protesty obywatelskie, wojna 7 października, Hamas, Hizballah, Iran, myślenie religijne, koncepcja pajęczej sieci.

