Burn towns, slaughter, broadcast: 2022 Sinwar memo said to detail Hamas plan for Oct. 7

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<https://www.timesofisrael.com/burn-towns-slaughter-broadcast-2022-sinwar-memo-said-to-detail-hamas-plan-for-oct-7/>

A six-page memo found in Gaza this year and believed to have been written by Hamas’s now-slain leader in the Strip, Yahya Sinwar, the mastermind of the October 7, 2023, onslaught, details the Palestinian terror group’s plans to target civilians during the massacre and broadcast the atrocities live, The New York Times [reported](https://www.nytimes.com/2025/10/11/world/middleeast/israel-hamas-plans.html) Saturday.

The document was found in May, after the IDF raided an underground complex used by Sinwar’s brother and successor, Muhammad Sinwar, after he, too, was assassinated.

The army said the latter Sinwar was killed in a tunnel at the European Hospital, where Hamas operated a command center.

The memo, from August 24, 2022, “appears to be a directive from Mr. Sinwar with instructions for the [October 7] assault,” seven Israeli officials were cited by The Times as saying. It ordered terrorists to target soldiers and civilian communities, “as well as to broadcast the violent acts so as to evoke fear in Israelis and destabilize the country,” the report said.

The reported memo ordered fighters to enter communities “with gasoline or diesel from a tanker.”

“Two or three operations, in which an entire neighborhood, kibbutz, or something similar will be burned, must be prepared,” The Times quoted the memo as saying.

Another reportedly intercepted memo from a Hamas battalion commander during the October 7 attack, just before 10 a.m., repeated the orders of the original: “Start setting homes on fire.”

“Burn, burn,” the commander said. “I want the whole kibbutz to be in flames.”

“Set fire to anything,” another Gaza City commander reportedly said.

During the October 7 attacks, Hamas terrorists set fire to homes and buildings, killing residents trapped inside or forcing them out, where many were then shot or taken hostage, with numerous victims burned to death.

Kibbutz Nir Oz alone was largely destroyed that day, when Hamas terrorists entered all but six of over 200 homes in the small community and either murdered or kidnapped one of every four residents — 117 people out of some 400. Of those abducted, nine are still being held in Gaza, of whom only five are believed to still be alive.

The Sinwar memo described a plan for a surprise assault on Israel, proposing that bulldozers breach the Gaza–Israel fence and that attackers strike in multiple waves.

It ordered fighters to “stomp on the heads of soldiers,” to fire on soldiers “at point-blank range,” to “slaughter some of them with knives,” and blow up tanks.

This was again echoed by commanders in intercepted memos on October 7, with one commander of a northern battalion instructing Hamas fighters to “slit their throats,” referring to the soldiers, “as you were trained.”

The intercepts included commands to kill civilians and soldiers indiscriminately and to take hostages, the report said.

When one of the terrorists asked whether to engage people on the road, a Jabaliya battalion commander known as Abu Muath gave the order to do so, instructing: “Kill everyone you encounter.”

He repeatedly ordered that fighters “take a lot of hostages.”

The memo also urged broadcasting the attacks to the Arab world to encourage people beyond Gaza to join the fight, including in the West Bank. There were multiple orders to document their crimes in Sinwar’s memo and in the intercepted memos from October 7.

The memo itself said: “It needs to be affirmed to the unit commanders to undertake these actions intentionally, film them, and broadcast images of them as fast as possible.”

In the intercepted memos from October 7, Abu Muath said: “It is essential that you bring the drone in so it films for the entire Islamic world.”

A Gaza City commander named Abu al-Baraa told fighters near Kibbutz Sa’ad to “document the scenes of horror, now, and broadcast them on TV channels to the whole world.”

“Slaughter them. End the children of Israel,” he said.

On Sunday, the [full Sinwar memo and an analysis](https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/instructions-given-by-yahya-al-sinwar-for-the-october-7-2023-attack-and-massacre/) were posted online by the Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, a government-controlled think tank.

“Events must be planned from which horrifying images will emerge,” read one passage according to the organization’s translation. “A few car bombs exploding inside an outpost or building and causing massive destruction. Heart-wrenching scenes. Enormous fires. 5 or 10 such images will break their spirit.”

Israel’s Foreign Ministry also published a picture of a page from the handwritten note, saying that it proves “the massacre wasn’t chaos, but choreography.”

“This wasn’t a ‘spontaneous uprising.’ It was a scripted campaign for the destruction of Israel — planned, rehearsed and executed,” the ministry charged on social media.

Thousands of Hamas-led terrorists participated in the invasion and massacre on October 7, 2023, slaughtering 1,200 people in southern Israel and abducting 251, amid widely documented atrocities and overt targeting of civilians in their homes and at an outdoor music festival. Forty-eight hostages are still held in Gaza and are expected to be released in the coming days after the sides agreed on a deal to halt the war.

They include the bodies of at least 26 confirmed dead by the IDF. Twenty are believed to be alive, and there are grave concerns for the well-being of two others, Israeli officials have said. Among the bodies held by Hamas is an IDF soldier killed in Gaza in 2014.