

Israel was Warned

by [Walter E. Block](#) (June 2024)



Nighttime Street Scene, Berlin– Lesser Ury, 1920

Many critics of Israel seize upon the claim that before October 7, 2023, Israel was at least several times warned of such an impending attack on the part of Hamas. Thus, the fact that the IDF did nothing to prevent this dastardly incursion and was completely unaware of it, means at least part of the blame for it is in Israeli hands.

Here is a *Los Angeles Times* [headline](#) attesting to this Israeli failure: “Why did Israel miss so many warnings of the Hamas attack? Here’s one answer.” This newspaper went on to maintain that “Benjamin Netanyahu’s secretive, ideologically rigid leadership style in that way helped undermine Israel’s security and imperil his people.” According to the *Guardian*: “Israeli intelligence leak details extent of warnings over Hamas attack. Officer who reviewed intelligence considered risk of big attack ‘an imaginary scenario,’ leak suggests.” In the view of the BBC: “Egypt warned Israel days before Hamas struck, US committee chairman says.” The *New York Times* [averred](#) that “Israel Knew Hamas’s Attack Plan More Than a Year Ago.”

Was this a case of the “boy who cried wolf” once too often, and was then ignored when a real wolf appeared upon the scene? Had Israel been warned of such attacks time and time again, previously, when nothing of the sort finally ensued? Was it a failure of the Mossad that the IDF let its guard down? The answers to all such questions will presumably duly emerge after Hamas is fully dealt with, and that country can hold an

inquiry as to the actual facts of the matter.

The present essay is devoted to a different, but not unrelated, issue: does Israel's undoubted intelligence failure lay any part of the blame—even a small portion of it—on that nation for the bestial Hamas marauding of October 7, 2023?

I respond with a resounding “No!” To make this charge is surely a gargantuan error of the “blaming the victim” phenomenon. Yes, had Israeli intelligence been fully on the job, this entire enterprise might well have been nipped in the bud. This would have saved the lives of some 1400 Israelis, the terror undergone by the roughly 250 Hamas hostages and their families, and kept alive thousands of Gazans who succumbed to IDF bombing. But it does not follow even in the slightest that therefore the only democratic country in the Middle East is to blame to even the slightest degree for all of this carnage.

Consider the following. A woman wearing a miniskirt is warned not to walk in a dangerous neighborhood at 2am. She ignores this caveat, and takes a stroll there anyway. She is raped. Yes, she is responsible for this crime in the sense that had she availed herself of this admonition and stayed away from that area she would not have been brutalized, we may stipulate, *arguendo*. But does she bear even a single iota of guilt for this crime? Of course not. That would be a case of blaming the victim if ever there was a case of blaming the victim.

Consider the logical implication of taking any other view. The lawyer of the rapist now appears in court and states the following. Yes, my client did rape that woman. But she bears at least partial guilt for its occurrence. The usual penalty for rape is 10 years in jail. We claim that the woman's guilt for this rape was 10%. Therefore, instead of sentencing my client to the customary decade in prison, you should lower his punishment to only 9 years. And by the way, we demand that the woman herself be imprisoned for one year; after all, she is

guilty too, at least partially.

This, we contend, is preposterous. No, the rapist deserves the full 10 years and the woman not one single second in the hoosegow. She is entirely innocent of any crime whatsoever. She has a perfect right to walk anywhere she pleases wearing whatever clothing of her choosing.

In like manner, Israel's admitted error of intelligence lays not the slightest guilt on its head for the mass tragedies created by Hamas.

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