

Revealed: Hamas plot to dig up war graves of British veterans

Hamas plotted to dig up the remains of British and Commonwealth troops buried in Gaza and blackmail the Government over their return, according to documents uncovered in the war-torn enclave.

For more than a century The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), chaired by the UK Defence Secretary and supported by the Crown, [has maintained a cemetery in central Gaza](#) containing the remains of more than 3,000 Commonwealth troops from the First and Second World Wars.

Many of the soldiers buried there died fighting the Ottomans for control of the Strip in 1917, a bloody conflict that paved the way for the British administration of Palestine.

The plot to exhume the remains of the soldiers and hold them “prisoner” is detailed in a seven-page document, shared with [The Telegraph](#) by Israeli officials.

They say it was uncovered by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) on Jan 31 at a compound in Khan Younis linked to Hamas leaders Yahya Sinwar and Mohammed Deif.

The Israelis believe it was written on or around Oct 5 2022, by an unknown official, apparently in response to comments made by the then-prime minister Liz Truss on her desire to move the British Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.



The land holding the Commonwealth cemeteries remains under Hamas control. Pictured: Graves in

Demands were to have included at least one of the following: a retraction of the Jerusalem statement, evacuation of the soldier's

remains to cemeteries outside Gaza or the retrospective payment of land "lease fees" for the cemeteries dating back to 1917.

"If the British government does not meet the aforementioned demands, the Gaza municipality will act to remove all the corpses from the cemeteries and collect them in a special location by judicial order, declaring that the corpses are considered captive until a solution or deal is found," says the document. "The British government will find itself in an embarrassing position in front of the British people, its political elite and its military if any country desecrates the corpses of its soldiers."

Although the document pre-dates the war in Gaza, the land holding the Commonwealth cemeteries remains under Hamas control and Israeli officials say the extortion threat remains real.

"The tactic depicted in this document is intended to quite literally terrorise the people of the UK as a whole in order to influence political decisions," an Israeli official told The Telegraph. "There is no way to rule out that Hamas will

use this strategy or other similar ones to influence external affairs or anything within their agenda in the future.”

Martin Glen, the author of *Gaza 1917: First Battle 26 March and Second Battle 19 April*, told *The Telegraph* on Friday he was sickened by the idea that the remains of soldiers of any nationality could be treated in such a fashion.

“What you’re describing, maybe using the bodies of the soldiers as bargaining chips, just cuts me to the core,” he said. “To actually hear that they considered digging up some of the bodies is so disrespectful, it shouldn’t even ever be contemplated.

“It’s crossing a taboo and a red line.”

The soldiers are beyond pain, although their families would be caused distress even after 100 years. Heinous as such an act would be it pales against what Hamas did to the living and then the dead on 7th October.