

# Watch ‘Failure at the Fence’

**The Washington Post and ‘Frontline’ examine how Hamas breached Israel’s security barrier on Oct. 7**

**WaPo and Frontline**

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The documentary “Failure at the Fence,” produced by The Washington Post and “Frontline,” is available to watch on [pbs.org/frontline](https://pbs.org/frontline) and [washingtonpost.com](https://washingtonpost.com). (Video: [Frontline \(PBS\)/The Washington Post](#))

When Israeli military leaders said in 2021 that a \$1 billion revamp of the long-standing barrier along the [Gaza Strip](#) would prevent incursions from [Hamas](#), people living in the nearby Kfar Aza kibbutz trusted them.

“They build a big wall, they said to us,” resident Israel Lender, 65, said in an interview for a collaboration between The Washington Post and filmmakers from “[Frontline](#).”

Lender, who said his relatives helped to establish the kibbutz less than two miles from Gaza in 1951, listened to the military’s bold claims about the strength and surveillance technology of what they called the Iron Wall. “We believed that this can protect us,” he said.

Yet on the morning of Oct. 7, Kfar Aza was devastated by Hamas gunmen who had blown through the barrier with ease. Lender said that as he and his wife cowered in their reinforced safe room, fighters ransacked their home and installed snipers on their roof. The brutality was repeated at residential areas and military outposts across the region, leaving at least 1,100 dead.

The interview with Lender was conducted for the documentary “Failure at the Fence,” embedded at the top of this page. Reporters traveled to Israel to interview survivors, troops, medics and security experts to establish the causes and consequences of the barrier’s collapse.

The film expands on a visual investigation published by The Post last month, which reconstructed the attack. Reporters analyzed hundreds of videos, photos, and audio recordings from before, during and after the assault by Hamas. The Post also examined maps and planning documents recovered from slain Hamas fighters.

The documentary examines the barrier's catastrophic failure. It premieres Tuesday on PBS and streaming platforms and online at washingtonpost.com. The investigation with "Frontline" found that the so-called Iron Wall was in fact a fragile barrier that gave Israel a false sense of security. A dependence on the structure and its sophisticated surveillance tools ultimately blinded Israel to its own vulnerabilities — and to a meticulous plan of attack that was taking shape on the other side.



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In an interview, Dany Tirza, a retired IDF colonel and former head of its separation fence administration, said it had been an error for leaders to make sweeping assurances about the barrier's impermeability.

“Of course it was a mistake,” said Tirza. “We really thought that we are building a very good infrastructure that will help to save the lives of the Israelis.

Unfortunately, it didn't work.”

In retaliation for the Hamas attack, Israel unleashed a war in Gaza that has so far killed more than 19,000 Palestinian civilians, according to the Gaza Health Ministry. Israel has vowed to eradicate Hamas, which controls the densely populated enclave.

A spokesman for the IDF, Lt. Col. Peter Lerner, said that after the war, the military owed the residents of southern Israel “accountability for the failure” that made the Oct. 7 attack possible.

“There will be a time when the IDF will be doing that soul-searching that is required,” Lerner said in an interview for the film.



“Failure at the Fence” examines how Hamas breached Israel’s security barrier on Oct. 7. The documentary is available to watch on [pbs.org/frontline](https://www.pbs.org/frontline) and [washingtonpost.com](https://www.washingtonpost.com).

