

Israeli army calls up 360,000 reservists in 48 hours, how does that work?

The Israeli army has called up 360,000 reservists for the war against Hamas. Who are these reservists and are they prepared for the battle that awaits them?

Maarten Albers / October 12, 2023

1 | Who are the reservists of the Israeli army?

Unlike many other Western countries, Israel still has military service. From the age of 18, Jewish Israelis are required to join the army.

[...]

2 | Are the reservists well prepared for the situation they now find themselves in, with a possible ground war in Gaza?

Ariel Heimann, the first commander of the Israeli reserves between 2002 and 2005, thinks so. According to him, it is logical that not everyone comes to training equally often. 'They have already learned the basic skills during their military service. Moreover, you don't need any training to drive an all-terrain vehicle. Pilots, on the other hand, come every week, and commanders several times a year.'

Middendorp also thinks that the reservists are sufficiently trained. 'They are only mobilized when things really go wrong, so their entire training is focused on these types of situations. But it is quite a change if you are a plumber in normal life.'

[...]

All that now seems forgotten after Hamas's deadly attack. According to **Heimann, now a researcher at the Institute for National Security Studies** in Tel Aviv, the turnout has been 150 percent since last Saturday: many former conscripts who were not drafted have also reported.

Due to the enthusiasm, complaints are now being heard in Israel about a lack of equipment and rejections because units are already full. **Heimann** sees such complaints as a positive signal.

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