

Ya'alon tells defense conference that Hamas 'did not intend to launch war'

By Yonah Jeremy Bob / 09/30/2014

Defense minister was speaking at a conference hosted by the Institute of National Security Studies at Tel Aviv University

Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon said on Tuesday that Hamas "did not intend" to initiate hostilities against Israel in the days leading up to Operation Protective Edge, though the Palestinian Islamist group "was planning to carry out kidnappings of Israelis in the West Bank and Gaza."

Ya'alon said that Hamas "achieved nothing" as a result of the 50-day Operation Protective Edge.

Ya'alon was speaking at a conference hosted by the [Institute of National Security Studies](#) at Tel Aviv University.

The defense minister told the conference that "we won't know for a long time whether [Israel] achieved deterrence or not."

As for the controversy over whether the cabinet was united in its goal to refrain from toppling Hamas, Ya'alon said that all of the ministers understood that "it wasn't worth" removing Hamas from power in Gaza.

The statement was alluding to criticism from hawkish cabinet ministers, namely Economy Minister Naftali Bennett and Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman, who publicly slammed Ya'alon and Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu for "not finishing the job" and toppling Hamas.

