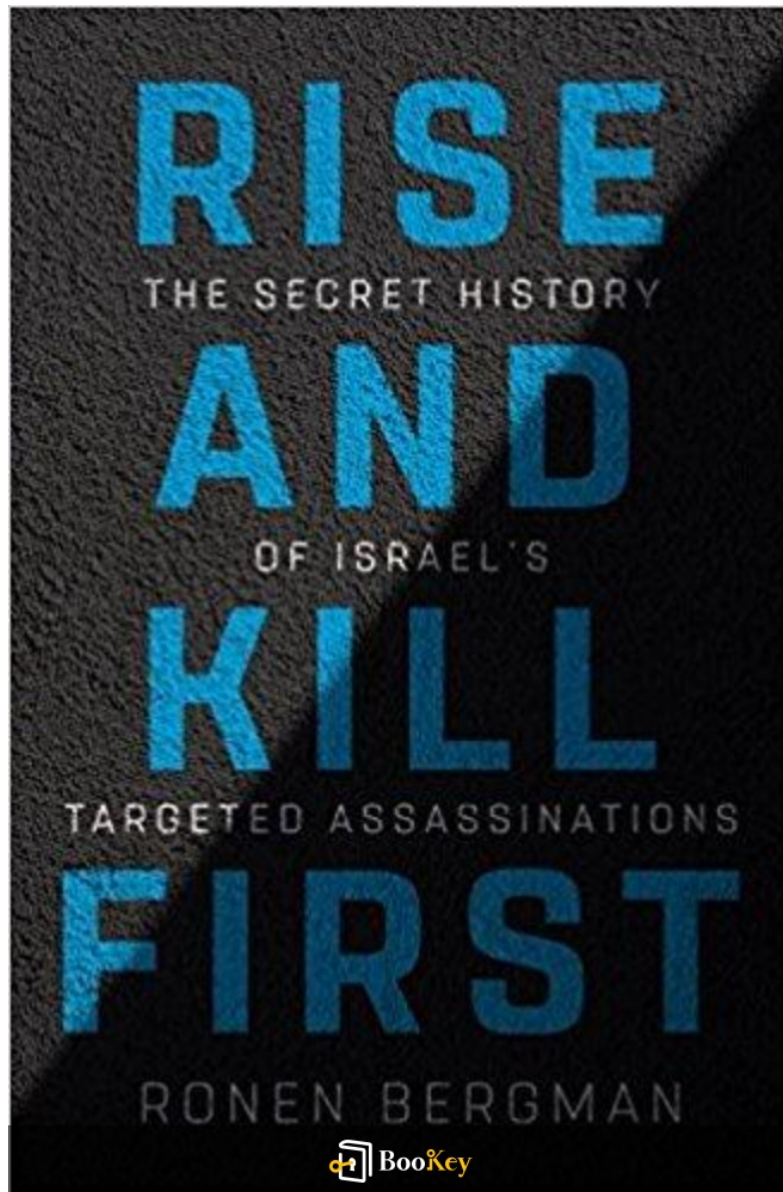


Rise And Kill First PDF

Ronen Bergman



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About the book

Book Overview: 'Rise and Kill First' by Ronen Bergman

In his powerful book, **Rise and Kill First**, Ronen Bergman takes readers on a deep dive into the intricate and often controversial realm of Israeli intelligence. This well-researched narrative examines the ongoing war for national security, revealing the chilling practice of targeted assassinations.

What to Expect:

Bergman sheds light on the haunting decisions made in the shadows, highlighting the complex ethical dilemmas faced by those involved in these covert operations. With unique access to classified information and startling revelations, he crafts a story that captivates while challenging the reader's understanding of morality and state-sanctioned violence.

Key Themes:

- The complexity of national security strategy
- Ethical controversies surrounding targeted killings
- Profiles of the key figures behind the operations

Conclusion:

More than just an account of covert missions, **Rise and Kill First** is a profound examination of a nation's continual struggle for survival. It is essential reading for anyone interested in the lengths a country will go to

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protect itself, providing critical insights into the shadowy world of intelligence operations.

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About the author

Profile: Ronen Bergman

- Name: Ronen Bergman
- Born: June 16, 1972
- Profession: Investigative Journalist and Author
- Expertise: Intelligence, Security Affairs, Middle Eastern Geopolitics

Career Overview:

Ronen Bergman is a distinguished figure in the field of investigative journalism, particularly known for his insight into intelligence and security issues surrounding the Middle East. He has built an impressive career, characterized by sharp reporting and comprehensive analysis.

Education:

- Ph.D. in History: University of Cambridge

Contributions:

Bergman serves as a senior correspondent for Yedioth Ahronoth, one of Israel's leading publications, and has written extensively on Israel's covert operations and espionage. His work is marked by deep scholarship and access to influential sources, making him a prominent authority in his field.

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Notable Work:

His book, "Rise and Kill First," stands out as a cornerstone of his contributions to intelligence literature, showcasing his exceptional grasp of the complexities of clandestine warfare and delivering a thought-provoking narrative to readers.

Recognition:

Bergman's investigative rigor and depth of knowledge have earned him respect as a top analyst of Israel's intelligence landscape.

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Rise And Kill First Summary

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Rise And Kill First Summary Chapter List

1. Introduction to the Notion of Targeted Assassinations in Israel
2. A Historical Perspective on Assassinations: From the Early Years to the 2000s
3. The Moral and Ethical Dilemmas Surrounding State-Sanctioned Killings
4. Case Studies of Notable Assassinations: Profiles of Key Figures
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1. Introduction to the Notion of Targeted Assassinations in Israel

The practice of targeted assassinations in Israel is a complex and multifaceted aspect of the country's national security strategy, deeply rooted in its historical context and the relentless nature of the conflicts that have beset the region. At its core, targeted assassination refers to the deliberate killing of individuals deemed a threat to state security, a tactic that has stirred significant debate over its legality, morality, and efficacy.

The origins of Israel's policies on targeted assassinations can be traced back to the tumultuous period surrounding the establishment of the state in 1948 and the ensuing wars and conflicts with surrounding Arab nations and non-state actors. In such an environment of existential threat, the Israeli government and military viewed these preemptive strikes as essential measures to safeguard national security. The term "targeted assassination" itself emerged as a euphemism, cloaking what many considered politically motivated killings in a more palatable framework.

One of the earliest and most notable examples of this approach can be found in the aftermath of the 1967 Six-Day War, during which Israel began employing targeted killings as part of its strategy to neutralize perceived threats from Palestinian militants and other organizations. The assassination of high-profile figures, such as leaders of the Palestinian Liberation



Organization (PLO), became emblematic of Israel's determination to secure its interests through decisive, often lethal, means.

The Israeli government's legal justifications for these actions have often cited self-defense, national security imperatives, and the prevention of imminent threats. This rationale was further solidified in the face of growing terrorist activities and the mounting pressure on Israeli security forces to protect citizens from attacks. The complexities surrounding these operations were compounded by the asymmetrical nature of warfare faced by Israel, where traditional combat might not suffice against decentralized and elusive militant groups.

Despite the strategic advantages, the use of targeted assassinations has not gone unchallenged. Critics argue that such actions violate international law and raise profound ethical questions, especially regarding the loss of innocent lives and the potential for retaliation. The controversial killings have sparked debates within Israel and across the globe, with some viewing them as necessary evils while others condemn them as state-sanctioned murder.

Specific incidents have crystallized these concerns. The assassination of Ahmed Yassin, founder of Hamas, in 2004, and the later killing of Khaled Mashal, another prominent Hamas leader, serve as pertinent case studies. In



Yassin's case, while Israel justified it as a preemptive strike against a terrorist mastermind responsible for orchestrating numerous attacks, it also caused widespread outrage and drew international condemnation. Such incidents highlight the volatile intersection of security needs and ethical responsibilities, encapsulating the challenges faced by policymakers in Israel.

Overall, the notion of targeted assassinations in Israel represents a significant tactical evolution reflecting both the psychological and political imperatives of an ongoing conflict. The actions deemed necessary for national survival are enmeshed within a broader narrative of moral ambiguity and regional instability, leading to ongoing debates about the implications of such a policy in the long term. As Israel continues to navigate its complex security landscape, the discourse surrounding targeted assassinations remains a critical and contentious issue, reflecting the broader questions of ethics, legality, and efficacy in statecraft.

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2. A Historical Perspective on Assassinations: From the Early Years to the 2000s

The practice of targeted assassinations has deep historical roots, tracing back centuries and significantly influencing the political landscapes in various contexts. In Israel, this strategy gained particular prominence due to the unique geopolitical circumstances faced by the Jewish state, including existential threats from hostile neighbors and non-state actors.

Assassinations have been a part of warfare and statecraft throughout history, often serving to remove key figures who pose significant threats to political stability or security. In ancient times, leaders often resorted to assassination as a means to eliminate rivals. For instance, the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 B.C. illustrates how the elimination of a political figure can dramatically alter the course of history. Similarly, throughout the Middle Ages and beyond, assassinations were frequently employed as tools of statecraft by monarchs and empires to consolidate power, instigate fear, or shift allegiances.

In the context of the Jewish state, the use of assassination became pronounced after the establishment of Israel in 1948. The threat from various Arab nations and terrorist organizations necessitated a proactive security posture. One of the earliest notable Israeli targeted assassinations occurred just after the Arab-Israeli War of 1948. The assassination of Palestinian



leader and key figure of the Arab side, Abdul Rahman Azzam, was a clear message sent by Israeli forces about their intention and capability to neutralize threats. This marked the beginning of a policy that would become integral to Israel's national defense strategy.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Israel's approach to targeted killings evolved, culminating in significant operations with broader implications. The most infamous was the capture and assassination of Adolf Eichmann in 1960, which saw Israeli agents capture the Nazi war criminal in Argentina and bring him to trial in Israel. This operation highlighted not only the willingness of Israel to pursue justice for crimes against Jews during the Holocaust, but also set a precedent for cross-border operations that involved the targeted killing of individuals perceived as threats to Israeli security.

The 1970s and 1980s were marked by a surge of violence from Palestinian militant groups, necessitating an escalation in Israel's response. The Israeli intelligence service, the Mossad, and other military units undertook numerous assassination missions targeting key figures involved in attacks against Israelis. One such example is the operation against the Palestinian leader Abu Jihad in 1988, who was responsible for orchestrating multiple acts of terrorism against Israeli civilians and military personnel. The targeted killing of Abu Jihad sent ripples through the Palestinian leadership, demonstrating the extent of Israel's resolve and capabilities.



As Israel entered the 1990s, the dynamics of targeted assassinations began to shift in response to evolving threats, particularly from Hezbollah and Hamas. These groups employed guerilla tactics and terrorism, necessitating a review of strategies to maintain national security. The assassination of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, co-founder of Hamas, in 2004 marked a significant moment in contemporary Israeli military policy. It underscored a shift towards addressing not only the immediate threats posed by leaders of terrorist organizations but also the ideological leaders who inspire and incite acts of violence against Israel.

Over these decades, the ethics and legality surrounding targeted assassinations have continuously generated controversy, particularly from international communities and human rights organizations. Critics argue that such actions violate the principles of sovereignty and can lead to unintended consequences, including the further radicalization of populations and the potential for reprisals.

By the turn of the millennium, the use of targeted assassinations by Israel had become a central component of its counter-terrorism policy, distinguished from traditional forms of warfare. The context of global conflict, evolving technology, and changing methods of warfare also came to shape the strategies adopted by Israeli operatives.



In summary, the historical perspective on targeted assassinations in Israel, from its early years to the 2000s, reveals a complex interplay between security needs and ethical considerations. This practice not only reflects a reactive stance against threats but also highlights the broader implications of state-sanctioned killings in the context of modern warfare and international relations. As Israel continues to navigate these challenges, the history of its assassinations offers valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of conflict in the region.

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3. The Moral and Ethical Dilemmas Surrounding State-Sanctioned Killings

The concept of state-sanctioned assassinations, particularly as executed by Israel, raises profound moral and ethical dilemmas that challenge both legal frameworks and human principles. At its core, this issue tackles the justification of the deliberate killing of individuals identified as threats to national security versus the sanctity of human life and the implications of such actions on broader societal norms.

The act of targeted killing, particularly in military and intelligence contexts, operates under the premise of preemptive action that aims to neutralize individuals perceived as imminent risks. Proponents argue that this approach is crucial for national survival, especially in a region characterized by constant conflict and the presence of non-state actors engaged in terrorism. They point out that state-sanctioned killings can prevent larger atrocities, asserting that in a world where asymmetrical warfare has become commonplace, conventional rules of engagement may no longer suffice. This argument draws on cases where effective neutralization of a terrorist leader led to a decrease in attacks, thereby framing the act as an ethical necessity for the greater good.

Counterarguments, however, question the ethics of such decisions, asserting that extrajudicial killings circumvent due process, which is a cornerstone of



democratic societies. Critics highlight the potential for abuse of power, leading to a slippery slope where individuals may be targeted without sufficient evidence or oversight, invoking issues of accountability. The targeted assassination of figures such as Hamas' Ahmed Yassin exemplifies the severe ramifications of such policies, not only in terms of immediate violent retaliation against Israel but also regarding the broader implications for peace negotiations and political relationships in the region.

Moreover, the emotional and psychological impacts on those involved in the execution of such operations also warrant discussion. The mental toll on operatives who carry out assassinations can manifest in various forms, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or moral injury, complicating the narrative that these actions are clean and without consequence. This aspect of state-sanctioned killings touches on the widely discussed dilemmas surrounding the soldier's conscience—how one reconciles the act of killing with the principles of humanity.

International law further complicates these moral dilemmas. The legality of targeted assassinations, particularly in foreign states, has been fiercely debated, with legal scholars questioning their alignment with the principles of sovereignty and non-interference. The UN has articulated that extrajudicial killings can constitute violations of human rights, raising the stakes connected to international relations and diplomatic ties. Israel's

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operations in foreign countries, such as the assassination of Mahmoud Al-Mabhouh in Dubai, spotlight how these actions can provoke international outrage and lead to long-lasting reputational damage.

In conclusion, the moral and ethical dilemmas surrounding state-sanctioned killings refuse to provide easy answers. As nations, particularly Israel, grapple with the need for security and the urge to safeguard citizens from imminent threats, they must navigate a complex landscape where the value of human life is pitted against the backdrop of perceived necessity in warfare. Ultimately, the challenge lies in finding a balance that honors both national interests and the fundamental ethical principles of human rights.

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4. Case Studies of Notable Assassinations: Profiles of Key Figures

The practice of targeted assassinations within Israeli state policy is not merely a tactical choice but is deeply intertwined with historical, ideological, and strategic narratives. In examining notable cases of assassination, we uncover the complexity and impact these actions have had on international relations, national security, and ethical considerations surrounding warfare.

One of the most significant and well-documented assassinations is that of Ahmed Jibril, the leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command (PFLP-GC). Jibril was a prominent figure in orchestrating attacks against Israeli targets in the late 20th century, including the infamous 1970 hijacking of multiple airliners. For decades, he was seen as a central figure in Palestinian military actions against Israel. Israeli intelligence identified Jibril as a direct threat, especially during the 1980s when he was responsible for planning operations that resulted in the deaths of numerous Israeli civilians. While there was an extensive campaign to eliminate his influence, it was during a series of operations in the 2000s that Israel focused on rendering Jibril incapable of future attacks. The continued existence of Jibril, despite many attempts on his life, has brought forth debates on operational effectiveness and decision-making regarding targeted killings.



Another infamous case stems from the assassination of Imad Mugniyeh, former military commander of Hezbollah. Mugniyeh played a pivotal role in orchestrating numerous attacks against Israeli and Jewish targets, including the 1983 bombings of the U.S. Embassy and the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut. He was infamous for his ability to evade capture and his strategic acumen in leading military and paramilitary operations. The Israeli Mossad, recognizing him as an existential threat, meticulously tracked his movements for years. In 2008, he was finally eliminated in Damascus, Syria, by a car bomb believed to be orchestrated by Israeli operatives. His assassination marked a significant moment in the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, showcasing the reach of Israeli operations beyond its borders and sparking fierce retaliation from Hezbollah, thus highlighting the precarious balance of power in the region.

Moreover, the figure of Mahmoud al-Mabhouh, a military commander of Hamas, stands out. Al-Mabhouh was instrumental in smuggling weapons and orchestrating attacks against Israel. In January 2010, he was killed in Dubai under mysterious circumstances widely attributed to Israeli intelligence. The assassination involved a complex operation that revealed the lengths to which Israeli operatives would go, even operationalizing the use of forged passports from foreign nationals. This event not only indicated the evolving sophistication of Israeli operational tactics but also raised significant questions regarding the ethics of assassination in foreign nations,



international law violations, and the potential diplomatic fallout that ensued, particularly with the UAE.

Another central case is the assassination of Yasser Arafat, although ultimately deemed influential largely through the policies aired in various conspiracies regarding his death. Though he died from a prolonged illness in 2004, debates surrounding the Israeli involvement in his health deterioration persist. The Israeli administration viewed Arafat as a significant obstacle to peace mediation efforts and sometimes also believed that eliminating him might pave the way for a more compliant Palestinian leadership. This case illuminates the thin line between targeted killings and the political motivations that underpin such decisions.

Collectively, these case studies of key figures underscore the critical, albeit controversial, role of targeted assassinations in Israeli state policy. They reveal a duality where immediate tactical advantages must balance with long-term geopolitical ramifications and the ethical dilemmas surrounding state-sanctioned killings. Each assassination not only attempts to neutralize a perceived threat but also sends ripples through international diplomacy, affecting alliances, triggering retaliation, and altering the narrative of conflict.

In conclusion, the profiles of Ahmed Jibril, Imad Mugniyeh, and Mahmoud



al-Mabhouh highlight the varied motivations, operational complexities, and profound consequences of targeted assassinations within the context of Israeli national security. They prompt an ongoing dialogue about the ethics of such measures, the effectiveness of intelligence operations, and their broader implications in the enduring quest for peace and stability in a laden regional landscape.

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5. The Evolution of Israeli Intelligence Operations and Their Impact on Modern Warfare

The evolution of Israeli intelligence operations represents a remarkable transformation in the landscape of modern warfare, characterized by adaptation, innovation, and a relentless focus on strategic objectives. Since its establishment in 1948, Israel has faced myriad existential threats, prompting the state to cultivate a robust intelligence apparatus that could address these challenges effectively and proactively.

In the early years following its founding, the Israeli intelligence community operated with a limited scope, primarily engaging in traditional military reconnaissance and basic human intelligence (HUMINT). However, as regional conflicts escalated and new threats emerged, particularly from non-state actors, the emphasis shifted towards more targeted operations, including the emergence of specialized units focused on counter-terrorism and intelligence-led operations.

One of the pivotal milestones in the evolution of Israeli intelligence was the formation of the Mossad, Israel's national intelligence agency, in 1951. Mossad's mandate extended beyond mere intelligence gathering to include covert operations and the formulation of strategies aimed at neutralizing threats to the Israeli state. The agency's inaugural successes in the 1950s and



1960s, such as the capture of Adolf Eichmann, a key architect of the Holocaust, showcased not only its operational capabilities but also its moral impetus tied to national survival and historical justice. Events like these marked a paradigm shift, where intelligence was not just about information but also about implementing strategic action.

The Six-Day War in 1967 served as a catalyst for deepening Israel's reliance on intelligence for military supremacy. The overwhelming victory against several neighboring Arab states was underscored by pre-emptive strikes that relied on accurate intelligence assessments. This operational framework showcased how intelligence could be pivotal in achieving rapid and decisive military outcomes, consequently shaping modern warfare dynamics.

In the ensuing decades, the Israeli intelligence community began to diversify its approaches, experimenting with targeted assassinations as a method to counteract specific threats from organizations like the PLO and later, groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas. The choice to engage in targeted killings emerged not only from a tactical necessity but also as an extension of a broader counter-terrorism strategy that sought to diminish the operational capabilities of adversaries before they could strike.

The implementation of these operations has illustrated a shift in operational warfare from conventional tactics towards asymmetric warfare. Where

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traditional battles involved armies clashing on the battlefield, the Israeli model began prioritizing intelligence-gathering, surveillance, and precision strikes against high-value targets. This shift has influenced not only Israel's military strategy but also the strategies of other countries globally. As states observe Israel's successes, there has been a growing acceptance and replication of similar models of targeted operations and drone warfare among various military forces.

Furthermore, advancements in technology have played a significant role in this evolution. Israel has invested heavily in developing sophisticated intelligence tools, including cyber-warfare capabilities, surveillance drones, and real-time satellite reconnaissance. For instance, the utilization of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) has not only transformed surveillance capabilities but also enabled precision airstrikes, rendering military operations more effective and minimizing collateral damage. These advances have set precedence in modern warfare, prompting other nations to explore similar technologies to gain an advantage over potential adversaries.

However, the reliance on intelligence operations as a cornerstone for national security has not been without contention. Critics argue that it raises significant moral and ethical questions, particularly regarding state-sanctioned killings and their implications on international law and human rights. The precarious balance between operational necessity and



ethical conduct continues to fuel debates among policymakers and scholars alike, emphasizing the complexity inherent in such a strategic approach.

Moreover, the implications of this operational evolution are not limited to Israel; they have reverberated across the global stage. The advent of targeted assassinations and high-stakes intelligence operations have prompted a re-evaluation of counter-terrorism policies and military strategies in democratic societies. As more states adopt similar practices, concerns about the normalization of extrajudicial killings and the potential ramifications for civilian populations arise, ultimately questioning the legality and morality of such tactics.

In conclusion, the evolution of Israeli intelligence operations epitomizes a significant shift in modern warfare, where the fusion of strategy, technology, and tactical execution has redefined how states engage with threats. From their historical foundations in traditional intelligence practices to the contemporary reliance on targeted operations, the Israeli model reflects both the innovative spirit and the moral dilemmas that accompany this approach to national defense.





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