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Rabbi Amnon Yitzhak: Government's attempt to draft haredim brought on war

• By JEREMY SHARON

Renowned rabbinical preacher and outreach personality Rabbi Amnon Yitzhak claimed on Tuesday that a "prophecy" he had made about the outbreak of war had come true with Operation Pillar of Defense.

During a lecture in June this year in Tiberias, Yitzhak said a war would break out between Israel and its enemies because of efforts to draft haredi (ultra-Orthodox) yeshiva students into the army.

He made the comments while the government was trying to agree on legislation to integrate yeshiva students into military service, following the High Court of Justice's February ruling that the previous arrangement – in which full-time yeshiva students could opt out of serving – was illegal.

"God sits in heaven and plays with them, and laughs, 'All of a sudden they're going to be drafted, they'll draft them, equality [in the military draft], equality,'" Yitzhak said at the time.

"Don't interfere with the apple of my

eye," the rabbi said, as if quoting God. "Those who study Torah are the apple of God's eye, don't interfere with them in case He does not remain silent."

He warned that "now you'll see, before they can agree on a new law, a war will break out, as always happens when people oppose those who observe the Torah and its commandments, and then you'll remember what I said and see if it was true or not."

He made similar comments again in August during a talk in Dimona.

The rabbi's official website, Shofar.tv,

published a statement on Tuesday drawing attention to his comments.

"Less than three months after the rabbi spoke on this issue in Dimona, and after two weeks of [rocket] barrages on the communities of the South, the Hamas Chief of Staff Ahmed Jabaari was eliminated," the statement read. "On the eve of the new month of Kislev, massive rocket fire was directed at Beersheba and southern Israel, and shortly after, it was decided to initiate Operation Pillar of Defense."