



**Intelligence and Terrorism Information  
Center at the Israel Intelligence Heritage  
& Commemoration Center (IICC)**

**January 12, 2009**

## **Operation Cast Lead - Update No. 12**

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**Hamas continues making massive use of civilians as human shields. An IDF search near a booby-trapped school (IDF Spokesman, January 11, 2009).**



**The IDF brings humanitarian aid to a family of 100 members living in the fighting zone in the northern Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, January 12, 2009).**

## The Situation on the Ground

### Overview

- During the current phase of the ground operation, IDF forces reinforced with reserve soldiers (integrated into the operation for the first time) have extended their searches and hit the military-terrorist infrastructure more deeply. Friction between the soldiers and Hamas increased and during the past 24 hours **dozens of terrorist operatives were killed** by IDF forces. In addition, weapons were seized and IEDs were exposed.
- The trend toward less rocket and mortar shell fire into Israel continues (during the past few days rocket and mortar shell attacks have averaged **20-30** a day). As a result, the Home Front Command authorized the gradual renewal of studies in the schools and kindergartens of some of the population centers in the Negev. At the same time, the deliveries of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip continue and the IDF holds a daily three-hour pause in the fighting for the humanitarian corridor (although it is not fully respected by the Palestinian terrorist organizations).
- Regarding the influence of the fighting on Hamas, at this stage it can be evaluated that Hamas suffered a serious blow but so far it has retained offensive and defensive capabilities. Hamas's upper military echelons, which have gone underground, have managed to keep a reasonable level of command and control over their forces, and direct the fighting from fortified bunkers and tunnels throughout the Gaza Strip. The blows sustained by Hamas's rocket manufacturing, storage and launching branches were heavy, but so far Hamas's rocket firing capabilities have not collapsed (Hamas retains its rocket-firing capabilities into Israel, although at a slightly lower level, as noted above).

### The ground fighting

- On January 11 reserve soldiers were introduced into the ground operation in the Gaza Strip. The forces, which had undergone training since the operation began, made it possible for the IDF to broaden its activities and increase the pressure on Hamas. IDF searches uncovered various weapons. In one instance, the forces discovered a school and a nearby kindergarten which had been booby-trapped with IEDs (See the appendix dealing with the use of civilians as human shields).
- During the past 24 hours more than 50 terrorist operatives were hit in the Gaza Strip. The IDF suffered no casualties, although a number of soldiers sustained minor injuries.

## Weapons and Tunnels Revealed by Searches on January 11



Shawaz EFPs (explosively formed penetrators) found by the IDF in a search during the ground operation (IDF Spokesman, January 11, 2009). The Shawaz ("flame" in Arabic) is a Hamas-made EFP which can penetrate 200mm (8") of steel. Hamas's weapons manufacturing capabilities are based on technological knowhow from Iran and/or Hezbollah.

## Israeli Air Force and Navy attacks continue

- On the morning of January 11 Israeli aircraft attacked a rocket launcher which had been used to fire rockets at the city of Beersheba **at the start of the school day**. In the afternoon Israeli Air Force planes attacked more than 20 tunnels along the Egyptian-Gaza border which had been used to smuggle weapons into the Gaza Strip. In addition, the Israeli Air Force attacked several dozen targets, including rocket and mortar shell launchers and launch sites, four weapons storehouses, the houses of operatives and two tunnels under their houses, and a number of armed terrorist squads which had fired at the ground forces operating in the Gaza Strip.

- Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead, the Israeli Air Force has carried out 2,000 sorties and attacked 1,400 terrorist targets. The Navy has continued its operations, supporting the ground forces and attacking Hamas targets.

## Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire into Israeli Territory

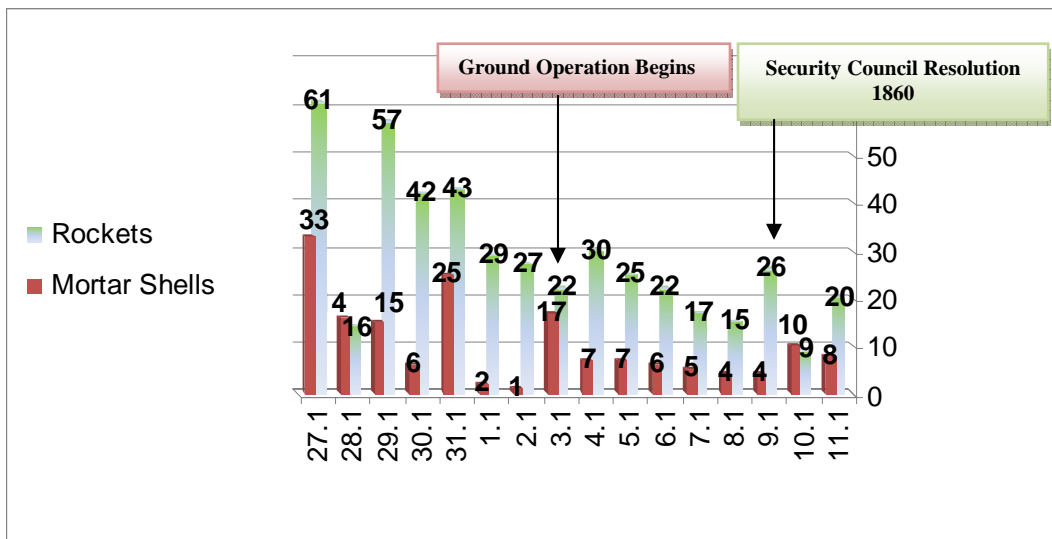
■ During the past few days between 10 and 20 rockets have been fired into Israeli every day. On January 11, **20 rocket and eight mortar shell hits were identified**. Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead **459 rockets and 166 mortar shells** have hit Israeli territory.

■ During the morning hours of January 11 the city of **Beersheba** was attacked twice by rocket fire; four civilians were treated for shock. At 1600 hours a 122mm Grad rocket hit the city of **Ashdod**, landing close to a kindergarten which was empty at the time; two civilians were treated for shock. At 2100 hours a barrage of five rockets was fired at the city of Ashqelon; no injuries were reported.



Home front soldiers at the scene of a rocket hit near a kindergarten in Ashdod  
(Picture courtesy of NRG, by Edi Israel, January 11, 2009).

## Rockets and Mortar Shells Fired at Israel during Operation Cast Lead



## Humanitarian Aid Delivered to the Gaza Strip

### Israel

■ On January 11, International Red Cross and UNRWA workers met with members of the Coordination and Liaison Authority and of the Ministry of Defense. They agreed on methods of improving cooperation between them and preventing misunderstandings between the various agencies and the IDF. Following the meeting, and meetings with Amos Gilad, who commands the Authority and coordinates activities in the Palestinian Authority-administered territories with the UN agencies and the Red Cross, the humanitarian aid deliveries continued.

■ Since Operation Cast Lead began, **more than 800 trucks** carrying humanitarian aid have entered the Gaza Strip. On January 12, as on the four previous days, a humanitarian corridor of three hours was opened, this one lasting from 1000 to 1300 hours, to make it possible for the residents of the Gaza Strip to stock up on food and make repairs to the basic infrastructure. In addition, 100 more trucks of humanitarian supplies and 60 trucks of animal feed are expected to be delivered. Teams foreign medical workers are also expected to pass into the Gaza Strip. IDF forces are working in coordination with the relief agencies to make it possible for civilians in the Gaza Strip to receive humanitarian assistance.

■ Dozens of trucks carrying food and other humanitarian supplies cross through the Kerem Shalom crossing into the Gaza Strip every day. **A video of the trucks can be found at:**

[http://www.mod.gov.il/pages/general/Maavar\\_Kerem\\_Shalom.asp](http://www.mod.gov.il/pages/general/Maavar_Kerem_Shalom.asp)

■ In an exceptional case, on January 11 a truck brought food for a family of 100 members living in the northern Gaza Strip. The delivery was arranged because security operations in the area in recent days made it impossible for the family to get food any other way. The truck was unloaded on the Israeli side of the border and the food was delivered by IDF soldiers to a site near the family's house (IDF Spokesman, January 11, 2009).



Left: Unloading the food on the Israeli side. Right: Palestinian families come to receive humanitarian aid (IDF Spokesman, January 11, 2009).

## **International Humanitarian Aid**

■ Deliveries of humanitarian aid from the Arab countries continue. Some of it arrives in Jordan and from there is transported through Israel in trucks and enters the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom crossing. The rest arrives by plane to Sinai or in ships docking in the El-Arish port, and from there to the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing. Aid received during the past 24 hours came from the following countries, among others:

- **Saudi Arabia:** An aide to the Saudi Arabian foreign minister said that **\$17 million worth of humanitarian aid** was expected to leave Saudi Arabia for the Gaza Strip on January 12, and that more than 850,000 people were expected to profit from it for the following 30 days (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, January 11, 2009). In addition, a shipment of aid from a humanitarian organization established by Saudi Arabian prince Talal ibn Abd al-Aziz is expected to arrive.
- **Iran:** The Iranian ship which left Iran on the night of January 9 and sailed via the Red Sea passed through the Suez Canal on January 11. A Red Crescent official claimed it would reach “the open sea of occupied Palestine” on January 12. According to the organization, its final destination is the port of Gaza, and its docking will be coordinated with “international groups, including the UN and Red Cross...” (Islamic Republic News Agency, January 11, 2009).
- **Spain:** Spain sent two planes carrying medical equipment and food (Al-Jazeera TV, January 11).

■ The organization calling itself Free Gaza announced that on January 12 a “protest boat” was expected to leave Larnaka for Gaza. On board would be doctors, journalists, pro-Palestinian activists and members of the European parliament. Its cargo would be medical equipment (Free Gaza website, January 11, 2009).

## **The Egyptian Initiative to Stop the Fighting**

■ The Hamas delegation which arrived in Cairo for another round of talks about the Egyptian initiative met with two aides of Omar Suleiman, head of Egyptian general intelligence, on January 10 and with Omar Suleiman himself on January 11. **Musheir al-Masri**, secretary of the Hamas faction in the Palestinian Legislative Council, repeated the Hamas position that any initiative had to include “an end to the aggression,” “the lifting of the siege,” and the opening of the crossings, including the Rafah crossing (Al-Jazeera TV, January

11, 2009). Both Hamas and Egyptian participants were careful not to leak the substance of the talks.

## **Constructing the Myth of Victory: Hamas Manipulations, Propaganda and Psychological Warfare**

■ Hamas, inspired by Hezbollah, is waging a propaganda and psychological warfare campaign against Israel. Its objective is to represent itself as successfully fighting Israel to **prepare the ground for a myth of victory when the time is ripe:**

- **Hamas strictly forbids the publication of the names of its terrorist operatives who were killed during the fighting**, especially since the ground operation began. A warning against divulging information and pictures of the dead and wounded of Hamas and the other organizations was posted on Hamas's main surfer forum.<sup>1</sup>

### **Forbidden pictures...**



Pictures from the beginning of Operation Cast Lead whose publication is currently forbidden by Hamas. Left: Yussuf Judaism Ziyab, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative killed by the IDF. The picture shows him shouldering an Al-Yassin rocket launcher (Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades forum website, January 1, 2009). Right: Alaa Ibrahim at Qatarawi, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative killed during Operation Cast Lead (Hamas's PALDF Forum, December 30, 2008).

<sup>1</sup> A Bulletin about Hamas' deliberate concealment of the names and pictures of its casualties will shortly appear on our website.

- **Hamas boasts of its ability to extend the range of its rockets to Tel Aviv.** Al-Aqsa TV showed a video with the names of Israeli cities, towns and villages which had been hit by rocket fire, hinting that the next target would be **Tel Aviv**. The name Tel Aviv appeared next to a large rifle sight with the subtitle, “All our options are open” (Al-Aqsa TV, January 10, 2009).



From an Al-Aqsa TV video: Hamas threatens Tel Aviv (Al-Aqsa TV, January 10, 2009).

- **Hamas claims responsibility for attacks it did not carry out.** For example, a rocket attack on the Israeli Air Force bases in southern Israel which are 50 kilometers (30 miles) from the Gaza Strip; blowing up a house in Beit Hanoun with eight IDF soldiers inside; and hitting an IDF aircraft over the northern Gaza Strip. Such lies reflect aspirations which Hamas's military-terrorist wing has so far not achieved.
- Hamas spokesman **Musheir al-Masri** also said that “everything is under control.” The Hamas movement and the Hamas administration, he claimed, were successfully directing the Gaza Strip, and that “matters are stable and the situation is as it should be.” [Note: In reality, the Hamas administration is in hiding and barely functions.] He also boasted that the Hamas leadership on the ground was currently formulating its “**announcement of a coming victory over the aggression**,” and that Israel had failed to achieve its objectives, whether they were to topple Hamas or stop the rocket fire (Iran's Fars News Agency, January 11, 2009).

### Hamas Media Functioning

- Hamas's network of websites continue showing signs of recovery. After having launched **Paltube**, it launched additional sites: a news site to complement Hamas's PALDF Forum, for news of the events in the Gaza Strip, and a new version of its site for the Islamic Block, its student wing. On the other hand, the Hamas newspaper Felesteen still experiences difficulties in functioning.

### Iranian Media Manipulation

- The Iranian media follow and report on the events in the Gaza Strip. However, their reports are **biased and manipulative**. For example, Iran's Fars News Agency, which is widely quoted outside Iran, reported that the Israeli forces had directly targeted a residential



building in Gaza City. It again reported Hamas rocket fire at the “Zionist settlements,” using the same picture, which was taken in the city of Sderot from two different angles, representing one as an “IDF attack,” and the other as a Hamas attack.



Left: The subtitle reads “Hamas fire hits one of the Zionist settlements.” Right: The subtitle reads “IDF fires at houses in the Gaza Strip” (Iran’s Fars News Agency).

**Find the differences...**



## Appendix

### Hamas Makes Massive Use of the Civilian Population as Human Shields, Causing Them Harm (Update, January 11)

#### Bobby-trapped schools

■ As Operation Cast Lead continues, additional examples come to light showing how Hamas uses the civilian population in the Gaza Strip as human shields as part of its combat strategy.<sup>2</sup> A prominent example occurred on January 11 when an IDF force operating in the northern Gaza Strip came upon a school in the **Zeitun neighborhood** which had been completely booby-trapped. A delayed-action fuse led from the school to a small zoo situated nearby, which still had animals in the cages. The IDF soldiers neutralized the IED. A weapons cache, including rifles and RPG launchers, was found inside the school.




Left: The school building. Center: The fuse (the white cord) around the building visible near the wall. Right: One of the IEDs (IDF Spokesman, January 11, 2009).

Click for video

<sup>2</sup> For further information see our January 2009 Bulletin entitled "Hamas Exploitation of Civilians as Human Shields " at [http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam\\_multimedia/English/eng\\_n/pdf/hamas\\_e028.pdf](http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/hamas_e028.pdf).

■ During Israeli Air Force attacks on vehicles carrying terrorist operatives and weapons, the drivers deliberately head for the center of a residential neighborhood to escape. The following video shows a number of instances in which vehicles with armed terrorists on board escaped into crowded residential areas. The pilots who discerned that the terrorists had managed to escape into civilian houses were able to deflect their bombs and they either exploded in the air or in open areas.



**Click for video**