



Intelligence and Terrorism
Information Center Israel Intelligence Heritage
and Commemoration Center

News of Terrorism and the Israeli- Palestinian Conflict

February 3-9, 2009

Deliberations about lull arrangement with Hamas... ...while in the Gaza Strip, nothing has changed.



Mahmoud al-Zahar at the Rafah crossing on his way to Egypt (Egyptian TV, February 8, 2009).



A Fatah operative explains to an Al-Arabiya TV correspondent how he makes rockets: "When we get the TNT it is in the form of rocks, so one of the jihad fighters grinds it [into powder...]" (Al-Arabiya TV, February 5, 2009)

Overview

- This past week sporadic rocket fire against the western Negev towns and villages continued, although its scope was smaller. While contacts with Egypt continue in an effort to reach a new lull arrangement, the Palestinian terrorist organizations make a show of returning to their pre-war military and security activity (smuggling, manufacturing rockets, military displays, security force activities).
- In Cairo and Damascus intensive deliberations have been held regarding the lull arrangement Egypt is trying to broker. Senior Hamas figures relate to the agreement positively, stressing the importance of opening the crossings and rebuilding the Gaza Strip. Palestinian sources informed the Arab media that Hamas and the other terrorist organizations could be expected to agree to the lull arrangement and that Hamas would shortly give a "final reply" to Egypt.

Important Events

Gaza Strip

Fewer rockets launched into Israeli territory

■ During the past week sporadic rocket fire continued to be directed at the western Negev towns and villages, although there was a significant decrease in its scope. **Five rockets** fell in Israeli territory (compared with nine rockets and eight mortar shells the previous week). No terrorist organization publicly claimed responsibility for firing except for the Grad rocket, responsibility for which was claimed by the so-called (and fictitious) "Battalions of Hezbollah in Palestine" (Qudsnet website, February 4, 2009). No mortar shells were fired during the week.

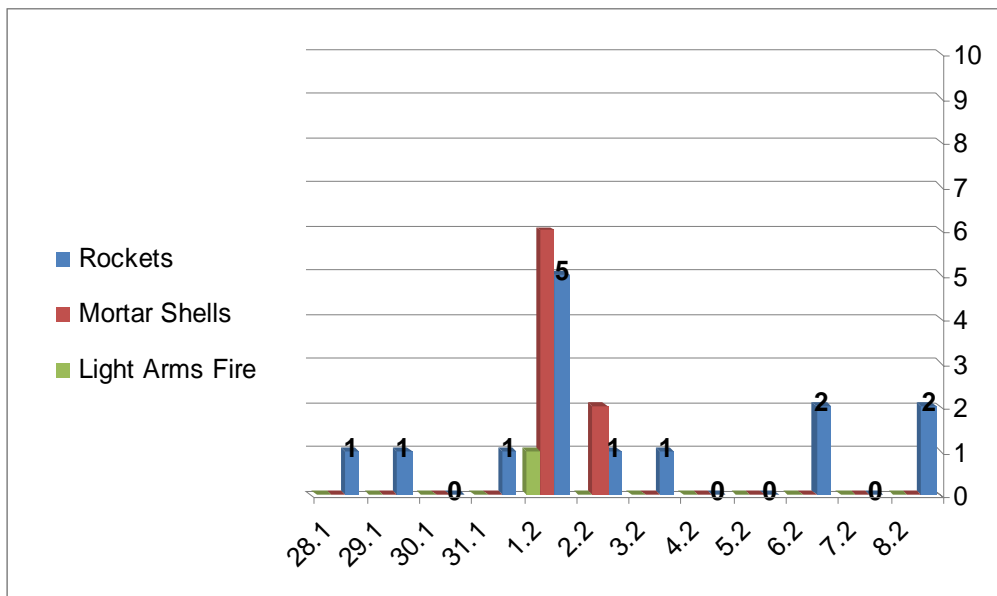
■ The rocket attacks were the following:

- **February 3** – During the morning, a 122mm Grad rocket landed between two buildings in the city of Ashqelon. Three people were treated for shock and several vehicles were damaged. It was the first Grad rocket to hit since Israel held its fire in Operation Cast Lead.
- **February 6** – A rocket was fired from the region of Beit Lahiya in the northern Gaza Strip, hitting a village in the western Negev. Another rocket was fired which fell south of the city of Ashqelon.
- **February 8** – A rocket fell in a parking lot in a village in the northwest Negev, damaging several vehicles. Another rocket fell south of the city of Ashqelon.



A rocket hits a village near the Gaza Strip
(Photo: Zeev Trachtman, January 8, 2009).

Daily Distribution of Terrorist Attacks in the Gaza Strip



■ In response to attacks, the Israeli Air Force struck terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip. The targets included weapons smuggling tunnels in the Rafah region, Hamas positions in the areas around Rafah, Khan Yunis and Beit Lahiya, weapons stores, rocket launching areas and terrorist operatives launching rockets in the northern Gaza Strip.

Terrorist operative killed

■ On February 5 an IDF force observed a suspicious figure approaching the border security fence near the Sufa crossing. The force opened fire. The Palestinian terrorist took a hand grenade out of his bag and the force again shot at him. The hand grenade exploded, killing the terrorist.

Judea and Samaria

Palestinian Islamic Jihad leader in Qabatiya killed

■ On February 5, **Alaa Abu al-Roub**, Palestinian Islamic Jihad leader in the village of Qabatiya, was killed during routine IDF and Israel Security Agency activities south of Jenin. In the early morning hours the forces went to his house and found him armed. They opened fired and killed him. A search of his house revealed an IED, two weapons and a vest with several ammunitions magazines in the pockets.

■ Alaa Abu al-Roub had been imprisoned in Israel several times and was recently wanted by the Israeli security forces. He headed a terrorist squad which planned attacks inside Israel. Five operatives, members of the squad were detained two weeks ago (IDF Spokesman, February 5, 2009).



The weapons found in Abu al-Roub's house (IDF Spokesman, February 5, 2009).

■ The Jerusalem Battalions, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad's terrorist operative wing, issued a statement threatening "a painful response" to Alaa Abu al-Roub's death, "which would shake [Israel's] foundations [and be carried out] in due time and place" (Jerusalem Battalions website, February 5, 2009). Senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad figure Khadr Habib condemned the killing and threatened revenge. He said that if Israel wanted a lull, it would have to include the West Bank, and if another incident such as the killing of Abu al-Roub occurred, "the resistance [i.e., the terrorist organizations] in the Gaza Strip would respond to the crimes...against our people in the West Bank" (Radio Sawt al-Quds, February 5, 2009).

Attacks in Judea and Samaria continue

■ During the past week terrorist attacks in Judea and Samaria continued, including IEDs, Molotov cocktails and stone-throwing. The most serious were the following:

- **February 4** – Four Molotov cocktails were thrown at a Border Police force northeast of Bethlehem. There were no casualties and no property damage. An IDF search revealed five Molotov cocktails ready for throwing.
- **February 5** – A Molotov cocktail was thrown at an Israeli bus southwest of Bethlehem. There were no casualties and the bus was damaged.
- **February 8** – Three Molotov cocktails were thrown at an Israel bus southwest of Bethlehem. There were no casualties and the bus was not damaged.
- **February 9** – An IDF force uncovered three IEDs southwest of Hebron. They were detonated in a controlled explosion by Israeli police experts.

The Gaza Strip after Operation Cast Lead

Israel continues deliveries of humanitarian aid

■ Daily deliveries of humanitarian aid continue to reach the Gaza Strip through the Israeli crossings. During the past week **200 trucks** entered the Gaza Strip **every day** through the Kerem Shalom and Karni crossings. The deliveries of diesel fuel and cooking gas also continued. The passage of relief agency and international organization workers in and out of the Gaza Strip continued through the Erez crossing,¹ and Palestinians with humanitarian problems continued using it to leave the Gaza Strip for Israel. **Note:** The delivery of humanitarian aid continues despite the terrorist organizations' violations of the cease fire.

■ On February 8, **Omar Kittanah**, head of energy in the Gaza Strip, said that 880,000 liters (more than 23,000 gallons) of diesel fuel had been delivered, enough to run the Gaza Strip power plant for several days. He said delivery had been delayed because the European Union had not yet paid Israel's Dor Energy company. He added that every month the EU paid for ten million liters (more than 2.5 million gallons) of diesel fuel, and that contacts were currently being held between Hamas and the EU to increase the amount (*Al-Ayyam*, February 8, 2009).

Deliveries of humanitarian aid continue through the Rafah crossing

■ On February 5, Egypt partially closed the Rafah crossing and stopped humanitarian and medical aid and foreign correspondents from entering the Gaza Strip. It permitted Palestinians to return to the Gaza Strip and wounded Gazans could exit after prior coordination (*Al-Basha'air*, February 5, 2009). Among others, the Egyptians prevented an Al-Jazeera TV team from entering (*Al-Masri Al-Youm*, February 3, 2009). On February 4, before the Rafah crossing was closed, dozens of medical teams and journalists left the Gaza Strip for Egypt (*Al-Quds*, February 5, 2009).

¹ An ITIC information bulletin about tension between UNRWA and Hamas caused by the Hamas thefts of equipment and food will shortly be issued.

■ A spokesman for the Egyptian foreign ministry said that the Rafah crossing would remain open for humanitarian cases in accordance with criteria set by Egypt. The delivery of goods into the Gaza Strip would only be possible after the lull arrangement had been agreed on. He said that Hamas was aware that opening the Rafah crossing would be made possible according to the arrangement and in coordination with the Palestinian Authority (Al-Jazeera TV, February 7, 2009).

The IDF prevents a Lebanese ship from reaching the Gaza Strip

■ On February 5 the Israel Navy took over a Lebanese cargo ship which had set out from the port of Tripoli, made a stop in Cyprus and continued to the Gaza Strip. On the evening of February 4 the Israeli Navy made direct contact with the ship and informed it that it would not be allowed into the Gaza Strip's territorial waters. The Lebanese crew then announced they were changing direction and heading for the port of El-Arish in Egypt. However, during the morning of February 5 the boat suddenly changed course and sailed toward the Gaza Strip. That raised Israeli suspicions that the ship was planning to smuggle weapons into the Gaza Strip, and after the ship did not heed Israeli warnings, the Israeli Navy boarded the ship and sailed it to the port of Ashdod.



The Lebanese ship Tali sailing to the Ashdod port (IDF Spokesman, February 5, 2009).

■ An inspection of the ship revealed only a few tons of humanitarian aid, as well as 20 passengers, among them journalists and the Archbishop Kapuchi, who during the 1970s had been convicted of smuggling weapons to the PLO. Everyone on the ship was interrogated by the Israeli security forces and then returned to Lebanon.

■ Hamas administration spokesman **Taher al-Nunu** denounced the Israeli takeover of the ship, calling it "a perpetuation of the siege policy." He said that it "does not indicate that the occupation has serious intentions of achieving a genuine lull" (PalMedia website, February 5, 2009). **Jamal al-Khudeiri**, head of the Popular Committee to Lift the Siege, said that boats would stop coming only when the "siege" had been completely lifted and all the Gaza Strip crossings were open (Al-Jazeera TV, February 5, 2009). On February 5, the Lebanese newspaper *Al-Safir* reported that another group of pro-Palestinian activists and correspondents was expected to leave by ship for the Gaza Strip in the near future.

Distributing Humanitarian Aid and Rebuilding the Gaza Strip

■ **Hamas** continues distributing money as part of its emergency aid program for residents of the Gaza Strip. According to reports in the Hamas media on February 4, so far the sum of \$25 million has been distributed as reparations for 5,000 houses which were destroyed, \$12.5 million for 5,000 houses which were damaged and are not fit for habitation, and \$5 million for 6,500 families of the killed and wounded. The next stage will be the distribution of \$8 million to 80,000 families, **for a total of \$50.5 million**. **Ahmed al-Kurd**, welfare minister in the Hamas administration, said that the numbers indicated the initial sum and that the rebuilding the Gaza Strip would take billions (Al-Jazeera TV, February 4, 2009).

■ On February 4, Palestinian Authority prime minister **Salam Fayyad** announced a program for rebuilding the houses in the Gaza Strip which were destroyed. He mentioned the sum of **\$600 million** (mostly from donations), some of which would be spent on UN aid programs, and the rest to rebuild the electricity, water and sewage systems in the Gaza Strip (Wafa News Agency, February 4, 2009).

Attempt by Hamas to Smuggle Millions of Dollars in the Gaza Strip Prevented

■ On February 5, a Hamas delegation on its way back to the Gaza Strip from Cairo was stopped and searched by the Egyptian security forces. **Nine million dollars and two million euros in cash were found in the possession of Hamas senior activist Ayman Taha**. According to media reports, senior Hamas figures Salah Bardawil and Jamal Abu Hashem sped into the Gaza Strip before they could be stopped by the Egyptians (Al-Jazeera TV, February 5). The two might also have been carrying large sums of cash. A senior Egyptian security source, who refused to be named, said that the money may have come from the **Muslim Brotherhood**. He said that Ayman Taha had been interrogated by Egyptian security regarding the Muslim Brotherhood (Qudsnet website, February 5, 2009).

■ After his interrogation, Ayman Taha was taken to an Egyptian bank and deposited the money, where it will remain until the Egyptian treasury decides its fate (Reuters, February 5, 2009). Ayman Taha claimed that the funds were donations for rebuilding the Gaza Strip (without mentioning the source of the money). He added that they had been forced to bring the money into the Gaza Strip in suitcases because of the "siege" and the closed crossings (Al-Jazeera TV, February 5, 2009).

Rebuilding the Tunnels and Preventive Measures Taken by Egypt

■ Hamas continues intensively rebuilding the smuggling tunnels attacked by the IDF during Operation Cast Lead. The work continues claiming victims. On the evening of February 5, a number of tunnels in the Rafah area collapsed, injuring several Palestinians; some Palestinian working in the tunnels are still missing (Hamas's PALDF Forum, February 5, 2009).

■ **Egypt continues taking measures to prevent smuggling from its territory to the Gaza Strip.** On February 4 Egyptian security forces uncovered five tunnels, blew up three and confiscated the goods from one (*Al-Yawm Al-Sabaa*, February 4, 2009). On February 5, the Egyptian security forces destroyed the house of a resident of Egyptian Rafah who was suspected of smuggling (*Al-Basha'air*, February 5, 2009). During the past few days a squad of 12 was detained in the northern Sinai (nine Egyptians and three Hamas operatives) who were smuggling weapons into the Gaza Strip (*Al-Yawm Al-Sabaa*, February 7, 2009).

The Terrorist Organizations Return to Routine Military and Security Activity

■ Hamas continues to make a show of the fact that its security forces have returned to their usual activities, with the objective of stressing its ability to stabilize the situation in the Gaza Strip. **Islam Shahwan**, spokesman for the Gaza police, said that Hamas's "security forces" were again wearing their uniforms. When asked who had replaced Sayeed Siyam (interior minister killed in an Israeli Air Force attack), he said that his security advisor, **Sami Nawfal**, now had that role. He added that during the fighting 230 policemen, 50 members of the security forces, and 11 members of civil defense had been killed (PalMedia website, February 8, 2009).

■ The Palestinian terrorist organizations attempt to show that rocket manufacture continues after Operation Cast Lead. Al-Arabiya TV correspondent interviewed **Abu Dajana**, a Fatah Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades operative. He described how his organization manufactured rockets, claiming that in recent years he himself had produced between 300 and 500 of them. He exhibited a rocket which he claimed had a range of 15 to 20 kms (9-12 miles), explaining the components of its propellant, which included glucose, sugar and nitrate. He added that the rocket's warhead was compounded of ball bearings, nails and pieces of iron, intended to spread and inflict as many casualties on impact as possible (Al-Arabiya TV, February 5, 2009).



A Fatah operative elaborates for an Al-Arabiya TV correspondent about the process of rocket-manufacturing (Al-Arabiya TV, February 5, 2009).

Hamas Uses Hospital for Military and Security Purposes

■ Evidence continues to be received regarding the use made by Hamas of **medical facilities** during and after Operation Cast Lead. Sources in Fatah reported that Hamas prepared the ground floor of the radiology unit in Gaza City's **Shifa hospital** as a jail and interrogation center. That was done after the jail in the Sha'ati refugee camp in the western part of Gaza City was completely destroyed by the Israeli Air Force. Medical equipment was taken from the radiology unit, changing its purpose, and transferred to the hospital's first floor and entrance (Al-Ahed, a website affiliated with Fatah in the Gaza Strip, January 21, 2009).

■ The **Salam Fayyad government's health ministry** issued an announcement accusing the Hamas security services of turning medical centers into prisons and interrogation centers both during and after Operation Cast Lead. The medical staff, which had acceded to the Fayyad government's call to return to work in view of the IDF activity in the Gaza Strip, was kept away from the hospital. The announcement expressed the astonishment of the Palestinian people and the entire world that after the IDF action the Hamas security forces had taken over the **Shifa hospital**, especially the unit which treated cancer patients and the new building which was supposed to be used for the reception of patients by medical specialists. Further, stated the announcement, Hamas had also used 15 rooms on the upper floors of the **old Al-Nasser hospital in Khan Yunis**, the ground floor of the **new Al-Nasser hospital** and the **psychiatric hospital** as interrogation and torture centers. Salam Fayyad demanded that Hamas bear the responsibility and prevent the theft of medical aid and relief (Ma'an News Agency, February 7, 2009).

■ During and after Operation Cast Lead a number of reports were received about the military use Hamas made of medical facilities and ambulances.² However, the Palestinian Authority announcement was its first official announcement providing concrete examples of Hamas's use of medical facilities for its own purposes and its first criticism.

The Diplomativ Arena

The Egyptian Initiative: On the Way to a New Lull Arrangement?

■ On February 8-9 there were intensive deliberations in Cairo and Damascus about the agreement for the new lull arrangement Egypt is trying to broker. On February 8 the Hamas delegation arrived in Cairo for another round of talks, headed by senior Hamas figure **Mahmoud al-Zahar** (his first public appearance since he went into hiding during Operation Cast Lead). From Egypt the delegation went to Damascus to consult with the "external" Hamas leadership, and from there it is expected to return to Cairo. "Palestinian sources" told an *Al-Hayat* correspondent that Hamas's political bureau would meet on February 9 to decide on its "final answer" for Omar Suleiman, head

² For example see our February 1, 2009 bulletin entitled "Gazans Tell How Hamas Used Them As Human Shields" at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/hamas_e052.pdf.

of Egyptian general intelligence (*Al-Hayat* website, February 8, 2009). Another source said that Hamas and the other organizations were expected to agree to the lull arrangement (*Al-Sharq Al-Awsat*, February 8, 2009).

■ Senior Hamas figures and spokesmen recently made **positive statements** about a possible lull arrangement:

- **Mahmoud al-Zahar**, Hamas spokesman and member of the delegation to the talks in Cairo, said that both the “internal” and “external” leadership of Hamas had a “genuine will” to end the current crisis with a stable, comprehensive lull arrangement. Such an arrangement, he said, would make it possible for the Palestinians “to rebuild the houses, mosques, hospitals, universities and schools which were destroyed.” He added that Hamas did not intend to relinquish the principle of “resistance” [i.e., a continuing terrorist campaign against Israel] “but it would give itself the opportunity to fix what Israel had destroyed” (Al-Jazeera TV, February 8, 2009).
- **Mustafa Al-Sawaf**, Hamas activist and editor of the Hamas newspaper *Felesteen*, noted that the delegation which left for Cairo was “carrying with it what could be called **the budding of a breakthrough regarding a lull arrangement**, especially after Egypt received Israel’s answers to Hamas questions, which had been transmitted to the Egyptians.” He said he was of the opinion that circumstances had been created which would make it possible to reach an agreement regarding a lull arrangement, after Hamas had received guarantees from those who sponsored it (*Felesteen*, February 8, 2009).
- **Ismail Radwan**, Hamas spokesman, said that Hamas and the other organizations seriously intended to reach a “respectable lull arrangement” which would lift the “siege”, put an end to “the acts of aggression” and make it possible to rebuild the Gaza Strip. He said it depended on Israel’s [“the Zionist enemy”] final positions, and its commitment to opening the crossings and lifting the “siege” (from an interview with Russia Today TV, February 8, 2009). Senior Hamas figure **Ayman Taha** said that “there is genuine progress in the issue of the lull arrangement, but any other progress depends on the answers Israel gives in response to Hamas requests for clarification” (Al-Aqsa TV, February 8, 2009).

■ The following are the components of the agreement as related by “a well-placed Egyptian source” to an *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* correspondent in Cairo (February 8, 2009):

- The agreement will be in force for **a year or a year and a half**, and will include Hamas and the other Palestinian organizations. It can be extended if all the sides agree.
- All the sides commit themselves to **a full ceasefire** and will “abstain from all forms of aggression.” Both sides, the Israeli and the Palestinian, have **the right to an immediate response** to any “aggression” from the other side.

- Israel will commit itself to opening **all six Gaza Strip crossings** for the passage of merchandise, medicine and fuel, in a way that will meet the needs of the residents of the Gaza Strip. All limitations placed by Israel on the import of materials necessary for the rebuilding of the Gaza Strip, such as iron, cement, pipes and generators, will be lifted.
- A 300-meter **security buffer zone** along the border [on the Gazan side] will be established, in which armed activity will be prohibited.
- The **Rafah crossing** will operate according to a **new agreement**, which will include elements of the 2005 agreement “with fundamental changes.” The Palestinians will be able to deploy Hamas members or members of another organization as part of the **forces of legitimate Palestinian Authority headed by Mahmoud Abbas**.
- A “special agreement” may be reached **regarding the release of Gilad Shalit**, which will be part of the lull arrangement or one of its appendices. Gilad Shalit will be released in return for 1,000 Palestinian prisoners, among them many senior Hamas figures and members of the Palestinian Legislative Council.
- **Egypt** bears the responsibility for overseeing its border with the Gaza Strip without the intervention of any external force. Egypt bears responsibility for its national security and therefore it must **“control the smuggling of weapons through its land and maritime borders, from Sudan to the Mediterranean.”**
- The Egyptian source expressed hope that a lull arrangement **would make it possible for all sides to regain mutual trust** through the rebuilding of the Gaza Strip and work to bring the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to an end and “to restore hope to the Palestinians and quiet to the Israelis.” He said that would make it necessary to speed up the process of establishing a Palestinian state according to a set schedule.

Khaled Mashaal's Speech in Sudan

■ Khaled Mashaal, head of Hamas political bureau in Damascus, presented Hamas's long and short term “work programs” at a rally in Sudan (Al-Jazeera TV, February 8, 2009). His main points were the following:



Khaled Mashaal in Sudan (Al-Jazeera TV,
February 7, 2009).

- **During the fighting** [Operation Cast Lead], Hamas's main objective was to "stop the aggression and force the IDF to withdraw." **At the current time**, the main objective is to open the crossings and rebuild the Gaza Strip. **The next stage** will be to "liberate" the West Bank, "Palestinian lands," the Al-Aqsa mosque and to realize the "right of return," [i.e., the destruction of the State of Israel].
- **The Gaza Strip manufactures all the weapons it needs.** It also seeks weapons from other sources [Arab and Muslim countries] and **imports** [i.e., smuggles] **them into the Gaza Strip**. Hamas needs the weapons to be ready for the unconventional battles Israel will force it to fight.

- Hamas's work program includes "hounding Israel on the diplomatic, political and media fronts" by bringing Israelis to trial and through [international] condemnations. Khaled Mashaal emphasized that "**we want to impose a siege on the enemy in every corner of the world.**" The Palestinians, he said, can do that, they have people in Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa. Arabs and Muslims should go on the offensive in the economic sphere as well. He appealed to the international community, saying that anyone who supported Israel would bear responsibility for it, adding that "the time has come to **get rid of that entity** [i.e., Israel], which is a burden on Arabs and Muslims and on all humanity."

The Internal Palestinian Arena

Other reactions to Hamas's intention to establish an alternative to the PLO

■ On February 2 and 3 the editor of the Egyptian establishment daily newspaper *Al-Gumhuriya* attacked Khaled Mashaal in the strongest possible terms for his statements regarding an alternative to the PLO. He said the following:

- The need for an alternative source of authority is a excuse **invented by Iran and Syria**, which seek to market the idea in order to sabotage the internal Palestinian dialogue in Cairo. By presenting an alternative to the PLO, Syria and Iran will be able to intervene in Palestinian negotiations.
- The important, genuine achievement of Fatah and Arafat was turning the Palestinians from the issues of refugee camps and a government in exile into a living Palestinian entity, a member of the Arab League and all international organizations. Hamas, however, has done the opposite. It has turned the state into a militia whose only achievement has been 1,500 dead and 5,000 wounded, with the willingness to cause more deaths.

- The game the Syrian-Iranian-Qatari axis is playing with Hamas is liable to turn the Gaza Strip into an independent “**Islamic emirate**” which may undermine Egypt’s stability to the point of establishing a Palestinian minimize-state in Sinai.

■ In an editorial published on February 4, the editor of *Al-Gumhuriya* attacked Khaled Mashaal and Iran, saying that as far as he could see, it was not Hamas that would replace the PLO, as Khaled Mashaal thought, but **Iran**. As to the hatred between Iran and Egypt, he said that Iran regarded Egypt as having won in the Gazan crisis because the UN Security Council and the European Union had adopted its initiative. Therefore Iran found it necessary to present the Arab-Israeli conflict to the Arab world as an Islamic-Jewish conflict. Thus Iran regards the shift of the Palestinian source of authority from “secular” to “jihadist” as a way of increasing its own status and playing a larger role.

■ On February 7, a support march was held for the PLO in Ramallah, attended by hundreds of Palestinians. During the march slogans were shouted against Khaled Mashaal and his plan to supplant the PLO. Fatah activist **Imad Safi** said that “no one would be allowed to erase the history of the PLO, which is also the future of the Palestinian people” (Ma’an News Agency, February 7, 2009). On February 8 a similar rally was held in Hebron. Hussein al-‘Aaraj, governor of the Hebron district, said that the PLO was “the home in whose shade the entire Palestinian people sits, both here and abroad” (Wafa News Agency, February 8, 2009).

The Northern Arena

Hezbollah continues threatening to avenge the death of Imad Moughnieh

■ In a speech given on January 29, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah promised to avenge the death of Imad Moughnieh, the senior Hezbollah military terrorist operative killed in an explosion in Damascus last February (Al-Manar TV, January 29, 2009). Sources within Hezbollah, which refused to be named, continued threatening revenge to mark the upcoming anniversary of Moughnieh’s death:

- On February 6, “**senior sources**” within Hezbollah told the **Lebanon Now website** that Hezbollah would hold a large popular rally on February 16 in memory of the three Hezbollah “martyrs,” Imad Moughnieh, Sayid Abbas Mussawi and Sheikh Ghareb Harb. The same sources said that “the response to the assassination of Moughnieh will come, without a doubt, and it will equal the killing. Its timing and place will surprise Israel...”
- On February 5, **Ibrahim al-Amin, a journalist affiliated with Hezbollah**, wrote in the Lebanese newspaper *Al-Akhabar* that Hezbollah’s decision “to punish and killers and teach them a lesson” was “operative in nature,” and therefore the decision could not be revoked.

He said that "Hezbollah has a sufficient number of options to do what it wants, everywhere..." The objective of the response, he said, was not simple revenge, but **deterrence**, which would make Israel "think many times before it retaliated."