



**The Meir Amit Intelligence
and Terrorism Information
Center**

News of Terrorism and the Israeli- Palestinian Conflict

(October 19-26, 2010)



**The Viva Palestina aid convoy enters the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing
(Hamas' Paltoday website, October 22, 2010)**

Overview

- This past week the western Negev was relatively quiet.
- On October 21 the Viva Palestina convoy entered the Gaza Strip. The de facto Hamas administration gave extensive media coverage to the convoy's stay in the Gaza Strip in order to boost its image in Arab and Western public opinion and to defame Israel. Hamas activists headed by Ismail Haniya met with convoy activists and said that "Palestine" had to be "Palestinian" and that Israel "is a cancerous growth on the living body of the Arab nation."

Important Terrorism Events

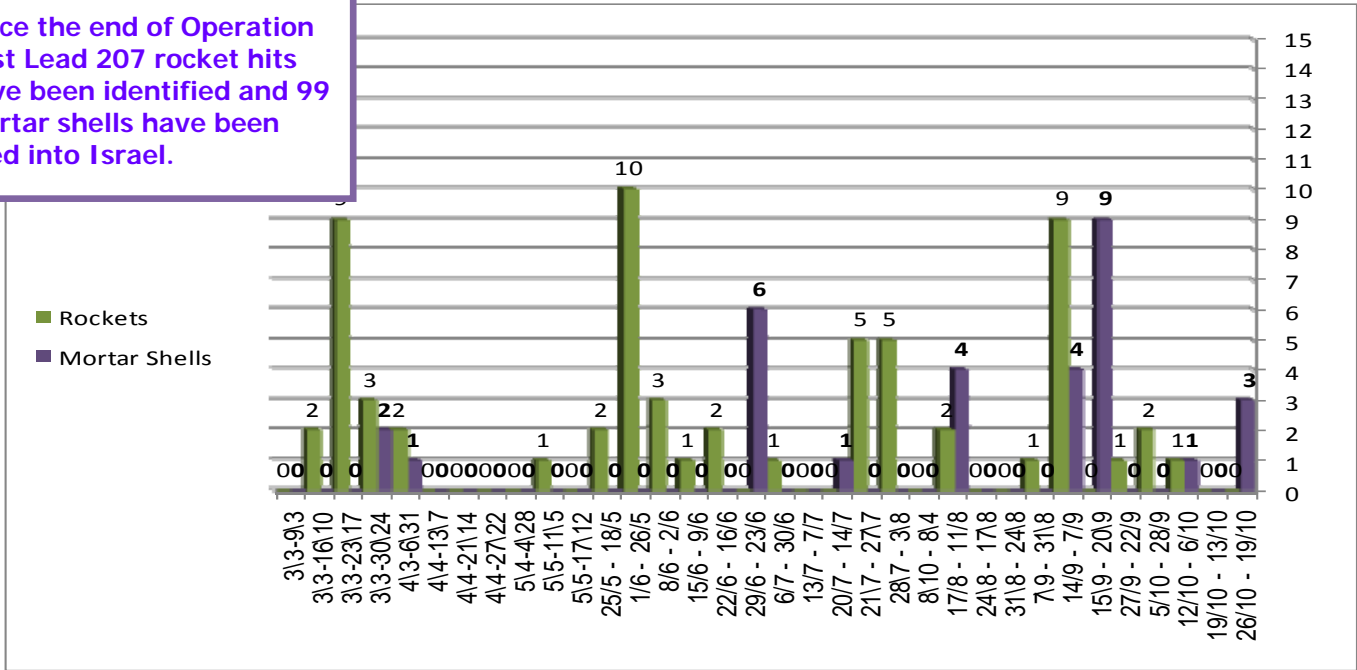
Gaza Strip

Rocket Fire

■ This past week the western Negev was relatively quiet. On October 25 a number of mortar shells were fired at an IDF force conducting routine patrols. Three mortar shell hits were identified in the western Negev. There were no casualties and no damage was done. The military wing of the Popular Resistance Committees claimed responsibility for the mortar shell fire (Qaum website, October 25, 2010).

Rocket and mortar shells fired into Israeli territory¹

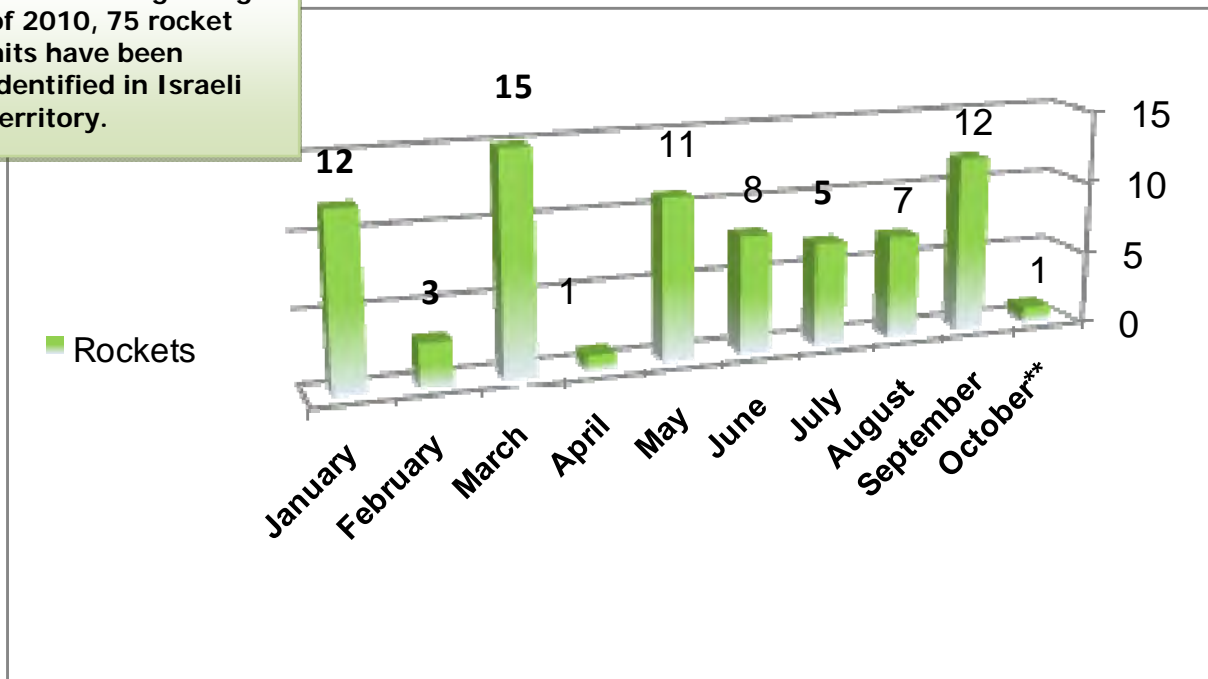
Since the end of Operation Cast Lead 207 rocket hits have been identified and 99 mortar shells have been fired into Israel.



¹ The statistics do not include the mortar shells fired at IDF soldiers patrolling the border fence which fell inside the Gaza Strip.

Rocket Fire 2010, Monthly Distribution*

Since the beginning of 2010, 75 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory.

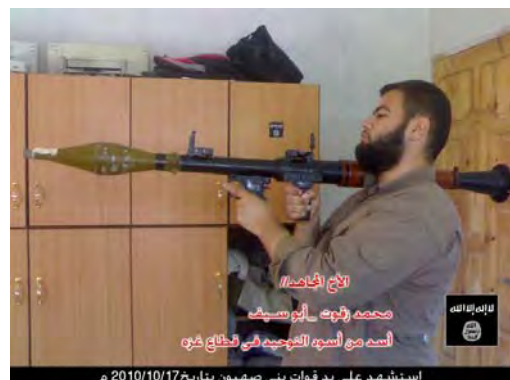
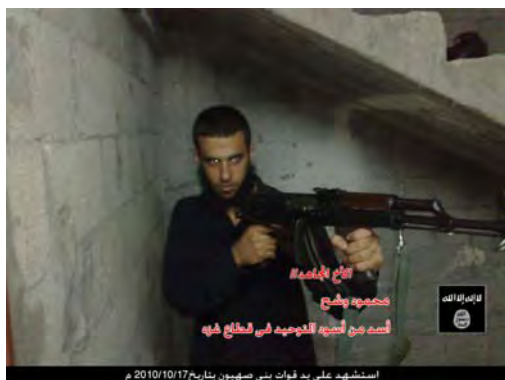


* Rocket hits identified in Israeli territory. A similar number misfire and customarily land inside the Gaza Strip.

** As of October 26, 2010.

Two Global Jihad Operatives Killed in Israeli Air Force Attack on October 17

■ A network belonging to the Army of Islam and affiliated with the global jihad announced that two of its operatives were killed in an Israeli Air Force strike on October 17 (Ansar al-Mujahideen forum, October 18, 2010). The two operatives killed belonged to a rocket launching squad and the attack prevented them from firing rockets into Israeli territory.



Two terrorist operatives of the rocket launching squad (Shumukh al-Islam forum, October 18, 2010)

Explosion at a Training Base in Rafah

- The Palestinian media reported that between 13 and 26 people were wounded in an explosion which occurred west of Rafah (in the southern Gaza Strip). There were conflicting reports about the nature of the explosion site, which was situated near an UNRWA school and residential buildings. According to one report, it was a headquarters of Hamas' internal security forces, while according to another it was "a training base for the resistance" (i.e., a terrorist base) (Hamas' daily *Felasteen*, October 21 and 22, 2010).
- The Palestinian Center for Human Rights demanded an investigation of the explosion in what it referred to as "**a training facility belonging to Hamas' military wing.**" It claimed that stockpiling weapons in populated areas, a usual practice for the "resistance," **endangered the lives of the residents and was a violation of human rights laws** (Ma'an News Agency, October 21, 2010). The de facto Hamas administration said it would repair the damages (PalPress website, October 22, 2010).
- Situating training facilities near a school (or other public place) is **a familiar tactic employed by Hamas and the other terrorist organizations, which turn civilians into human shields**. Its objective is to increase the terrorist operatives' chance of survival and to make it difficult for the IDF to operate, despite the fact that it greatly endangers school children and the civilians living near terrorist organization facilities.

Judea and Samaria

IDF Counterterrorism Activities

- This past week the Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities in Judea and Samaria.
- On October 24 stones were thrown at an Israeli bus south of Ramallah. There were no casualties but the bus was damaged (IDF Spokesman, October 26, 2010).

Hamas Weapons Stockpile Exposed

- According to Palestinian sources, the Palestinian Authority security services exposed a large Hamas weapons stockpile in Ramallah, which contained automatic weapons and ammunition. **Adnan al-Damiri**, spokesman for the security services in Judea and Samaria, claimed that the weapons were intended for use against the Palestinian Authority. He added that an investigation of the incident only verified Hamas' intention to carry out a military action against the PA (*Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, October 22, 2010). **Sami Abu Zuhri**, Hamas spokesman, denied the allegations, claiming that they proved that the PA was trying to destroy the "resistance" [i.e., terrorist organizations] in Judea and Samaria (Hamas' Paltoday website, October 22, 2010).

The Peace Process

■ **Saeb Erekat**, the PLO's chief negotiator, said that if the negotiations with Israel failed, the Palestinians intended to appeal to the UN for recognition of a Palestinian state (Agence France-Presse, October 20, 2010). **Yasser Abd Rabbo**, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee, said that if the negotiations were not renewed, the Palestinians would appeal to the Security Council or the General Assembly. He threatened that if Israel continued refusing to honor agreements, "the time might come when the PLO would consider its position regarding the agreements" (*Al-Hayat*, October 23, 2010).

Khaled Mashaal Interviewed by Newsweek

■ Khaled Mashaal, head of Hamas' political bureau in Damascus, was interviewed by *Newsweek*, choosing his words for Western ears. He repeated the Hamas position that if an agreement were reached that would provide for a Palestinian state with the 1967 borders and Jerusalem as its capital and had sovereignty over its land and borders, and the "return" of the Palestinian refugees were achieved and the Israeli settlements disappeared, Hamas would be prepared to accept it. He equated the so-called "resistance" (i.e., the terrorist organizations) with the French underground which fought the Nazis during the Second World War and with the American revolutionaries during America's War of Independence, and claimed that the "resistance" was "legal," because the occupation was "illegal." He added that the "resistance" (i.e., violence and terrorism) was meant to pressure Israel along with diplomacy.

■ When asked about reports of Hamas' loss of popularity in the Gaza Strip, he claimed that "[with] any authority in the world there are segments of public opinion that opposes them. The question should not be the popularity going up or down. The question is how could our one and a half million people put up with four years of siege and still be pro-Hamas." **He admitted that Hamas accepted money from Iran**, but claimed that it was "unconditional," and avoided the issue of Hamas' receipt of weapons from Iran. He claimed that Israel knew abducted soldier Gilad Shalit's health "is good," and said **he was interested in a dialogue with the United States.**²

² <http://www.newsweek.com/2010/10/14/hamas-sticks-to-the-hard-line.html>.

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Crossings

■ This past week between 132 and 267 trucks laden with merchandise entered the Gaza Strip every day. Most of them carried food products and animal feed, electrical appliances and basic goods. In addition, more than \$13 million were transferred to UNRWA to pay salaries and finance the organization's activities (Website of the Israeli government coordinator for the territories, October 26, 2010).

Khaled Mashaal Meets with a Delegation of the Elders

■ A delegation of the "Elders," an international group of prominent former world leaders, among them former United States President Jimmy Carter and South African Bishop Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela, met in Damascus with Khaled Mashaal, head of Hamas' political bureau. They also met with other senior Hamas figures who were in Damascus. According to Osama Hamdan, in charge of Hamas' external relations, Khaled Mashaal made it clear to the delegation that pressure had to be exerted on Israel and that the so-called "siege" of the Gaza Strip had to end (Hamas' Palestine-info website, October 19; *Newsweek* website, October 18, 2010). The delegation also visited East Jerusalem and met with Israeli public figures (Elders website, October 26, 2010).



Elders representatives meet with Khaled Mashaal. At the extreme left of the poster the Palestinian flag covers all "Palestine," a symbol of Hamas' striving to take control of "all historical Palestine," putting an end to the existence of the State of Israel (Hamas' Palestine-info website, October 19, 2010).

Flotillas and Convoys to the Gaza Strip

The Viva Palestina Convoy Enters the Gaza Strip

■ During the afternoon of Thursday, October 21, the Viva Palestina convoy entered the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing. It comprised 150 vehicles and 350 participants, most of whom arrived in El-Arish by air. The convoy brought equipment worth about \$5 million. Convoy activists spent three days in the Gaza Strip, during which receptions were held for them at various ceremonies and events organized and conducted by the de facto Hamas administration.



The convoy is welcomed on its entrance to the Gaza Strip (Hamas' Paltoday website, October 22, 2010).

■ The de facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip turned the convoy's entrance into a media campaign to improve its image in Western and Arab public opinion and defame Israel, and to exert pressure on Israel for a unilateral lifting of the so-called "siege." Convoy activists, especially those from the Arab-Muslim world, were included in ceremonies and events which were clearly Hamas-Islamist in character (On the other hand, the European members of the convoy, who were in the minority after the Middle East contingents arrived, made sure to keep a low media profile.)

■ The convoy activists met with senior Hamas figures, headed by Ismail Haniya, head of the de facto Hamas administration. During a sermon he called Israel ("the occupation") "a cancerous growth on the living body of the Arab nation" and said that Palestine was and would remain Palestinian, Arab and Muslim. To soften the murderous image of the Hamas administration, Fathi Hamad, interior minister, said that Hamas had released dozens of criminals as a gesture to the convoy and in accordance with the request of its moving spirit, George Galloway. The prisoners were released in a festive ceremony on October 23 (Safa News Agency, October 23, 2010).

■ Members of the Turkish delegation, who did not reveal their organizational affiliations, were taken for a tour by commanders of the military-terrorist wing of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. The PIJ's website posted pictures of the Turks, who joined PIJ operatives and were photographed with them holding weapons, wearing uniforms and decorated with PIJ headbands. The pictures were posted on the website of the Jerusalem Battalions, the PIJ's military-terrorist wing, and removed after a short period of time.



Members of the Turkish delegation to the Viva Palestina convoy visit Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorist operatives Photo from the Jerusalem Battalions Aalam Ghaza forum, taken from the official Jerusalem Battalions website, October 26, 2010). (The man whose face has been obscured is a member of the Turkish delegation.)

■ Around noon on October 24 the members of the convoy left the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing and held a press conference organized by convoy leader Kevin Ovenden. He reported that **Viva Palestina was planning another convoy, this one to be called Lifeline 6, which would arrive in the Gaza Strip in the near future** (Safa News Agency, October 24, 2010).

Other Initiatives

■ **Paul Larudee**, senior activist of the pro-Hamas movements Free Palestine (FPM) Free Gaza (FGM) and International Solidarity (ISM), told the Iranian PressTV that plans were being made to send a plane to the Gaza Strip and to raise international awareness of the so-called "right of return" of the Palestinians. He said the following:

- The FPM wanted to buy, for half a million dollars, **a plane constructed in Poland and able to take off and land on a short runway in difficult terrain**. The organization intended to land it in the Gaza Strip on one of the roads leading to the Israeli settlements, or some other place in the Gaza Strip (PressTV, October 19, 2010).
- **The FPM intended to fly as many Palestinian volunteers as possible to the airport** [by implication, Ben-Gurion International Airport in Israel] where "they will insist on their rights as Palestinian refugees" and ask to "return to their homes." He claimed

that there were already 100 volunteers and that "no one will forget this plane," because it would be extensively covered by the media (PressTV, October 19, 2010).³

● **Freedom Fleet 2:** Several of the organizers of the upgraded flotilla of the anti-Israel coalition called Freedom Fleet 2 announced that **they expected the flotilla to set sail between March and May 2011**. They said it would be composed of between 12 and 20 ships with volunteers from Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Greece, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Malaysia, Holland, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and one ship of volunteers from the United States, which would sail under the American flag. According to the organizers, the flotilla is expected to sail from a number of ports at the same time and contacts to that end are being held with Spain, Greece, Italy, various Arab countries, Turkey and Cyprus. Concerning the provision of the ships, the organizers have said that "more than 12 European countries and between eight and ten Arab countries are working on it" (Al-Quds, October 21; Agence France-Presse, October 19; the Voice of Palestine radio, October 20, 2010).

³ For further information see the September 6, 2010 bulletin, "An anti-Israel coalition, some of whose members organized the Mavi Marmara flotilla, were encouraged by its results..." at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/jpc_e120.pdf.