



**The Meir Amit Intelligence
and Terrorism Information**

News of Terrorism and the Israeli- Palestinian Conflict

January 5-11, 2011



**Palestinian Islamic Jihad operatives fire rockets into Israeli territory injuring six foreign workers
(Website of the Jerusalem Battalions, the PIJ's military wing, January 8, 2011).**

Overview

- The terrorist organizations operating in the Gaza Strip continue escalating their rocket and mortar shell fire. This past week eight rocket and 13 mortar shell hits were identified. Six foreign workers were wounded, one of them critically. An IDF soldier was killed and four others were wounded, the result of a technical error which occurred when an IDF force fired mortar shells at a terrorist squad which was planting IEDs near the security fence. In response to terrorist activity the Israeli Air Force struck terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip several times.
- The Palestinian Authority continues its diplomatic activities to gain recognition for a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders. This past week Chile announced its intention to recognize a "free, independent, sovereign" Palestinian state [with no mention of the 1967 borders]. The PA is trying to enlist other Latin American countries to join them.

Important Events

The Gaza Strip

IDF Soldier Killed during Counterterrorism Activities

■ On January 7 an IDF force located a three-man terrorist squad laying IEDs near the Gaza Strip security fence. A force fired mortar shells at the squad. A technical error resulted in the death of First Sergeant Nadav Rotenberg and the wounding of four other IDF soldiers (IDF Spokesman's website, January 7, 2011). Several terrorist organizations claimed responsibility for the incident, among them the military wings of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (Ma'an News Agency, January 7, 2011) and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (Website of the Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades, January 8, 2011).

Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire

■ This past week there was a increase in the number of rockets and mortar shells fired from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory. Eight rockets and 13 mortar shell hits were identified in towns and villages in the western Negev. Six civilians were wounded, one of them critically.

■ The main attacks were the following:

● On **January 10** three rocket hits were identified in an open area near the southern Israeli city of Ashqelon and one in an open area. There were no casualties and no damage was done.

● On **January 7** a rocket hit was identified near the security fence. There were no casualties and no damage was done.

● On **January 6** mortar shell hits were identified over a 24-hour period. Two mortar shells hit a building and wounded six foreign workers, one of them critically and one seriously; the rest sustained minor injuries. The Jerusalem Battalions, the military wing of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, claimed responsibility for the attack and even documented it (Jerusalem Battalions website, January 9, 2011). The Popular Resistance Committees also claimed responsibility for the attack (Website of the Salah al-Din Brigades, the military wing of the Popular Resistance Committees, January 5, 2011).



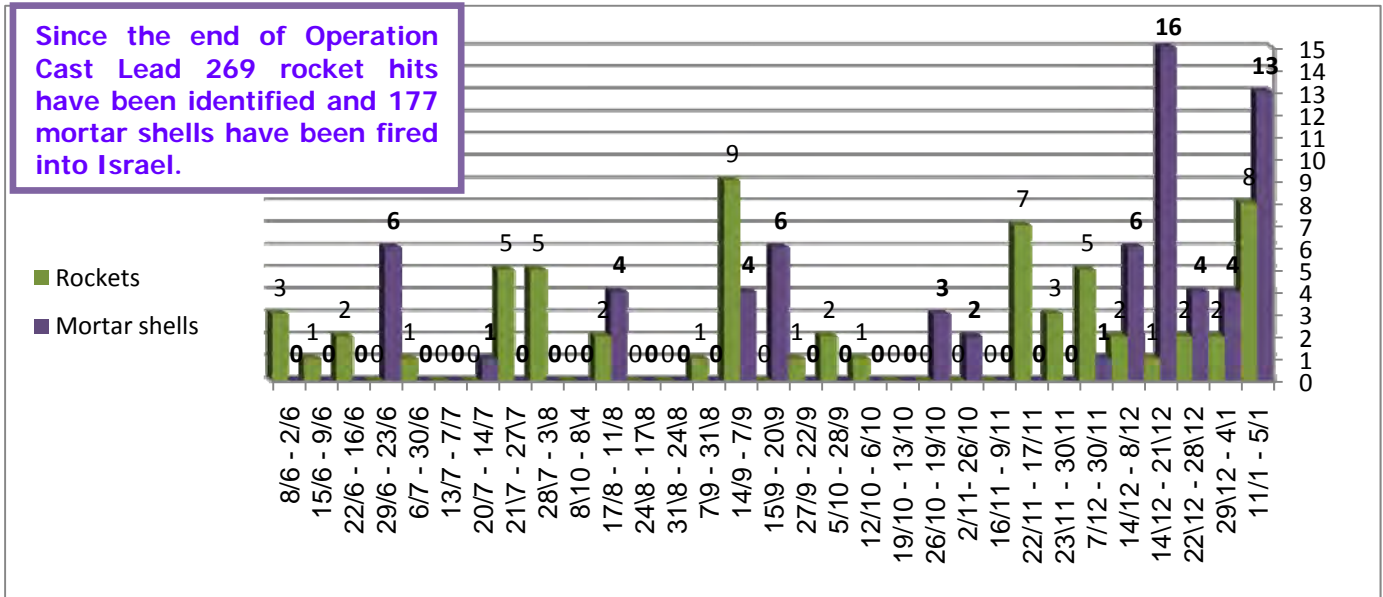
Site of the mortar shell hit which wounded six foreign workers (Photo courtesy of Israel Channel 10 TV, January 8, 2011).



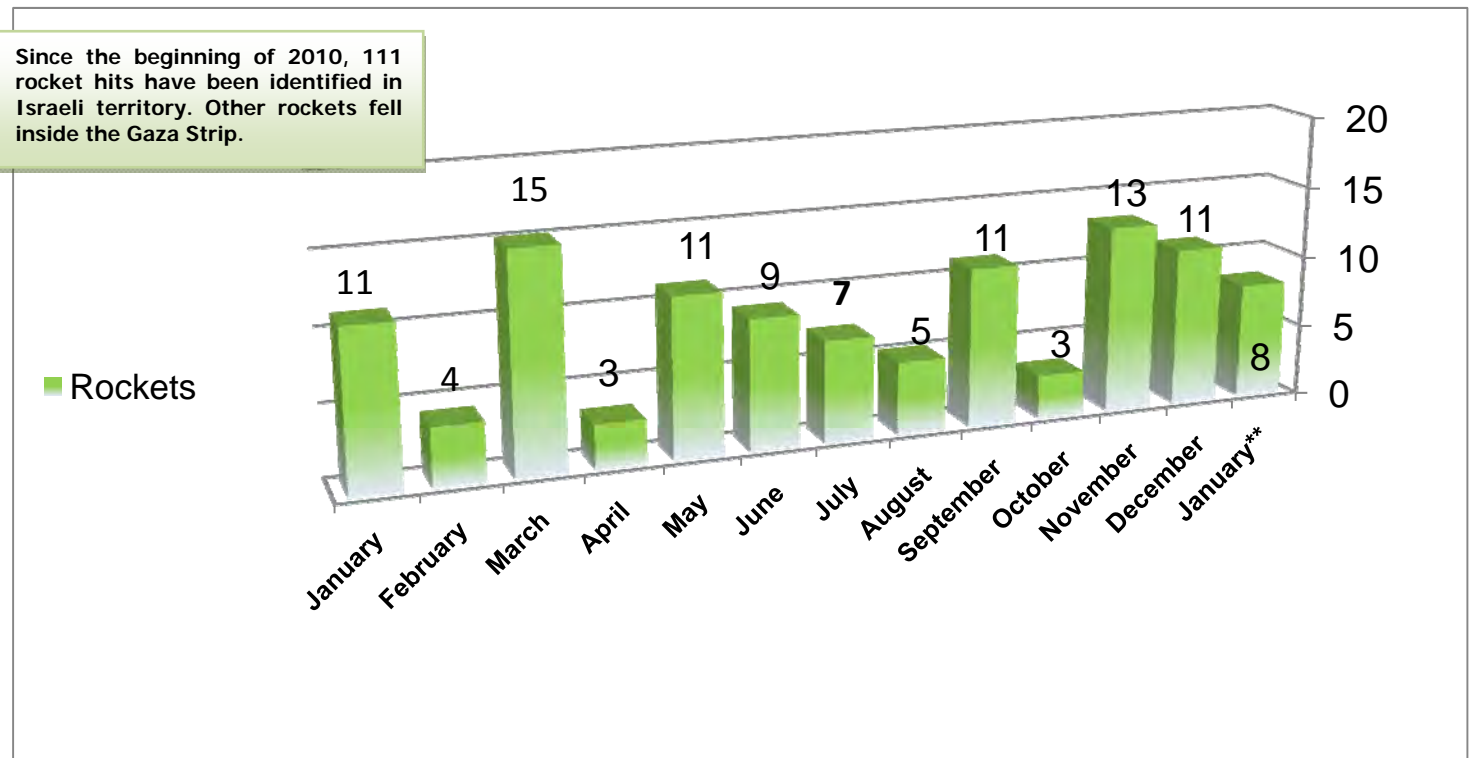
The Palestinian Islamic Jihad documents the mortar shell attack which wounded six workers (Jerusalem Battalions website, January 8, 2011).

- On **January 5** a rocket hit was identified in an open area across from the central Gaza Strip. There were no casualties and no damage was done. Six other rocket hits were identified in the western Negev. There were no casualties and no damage was done.

Rockets and mortar shells fired into Israeli territory¹

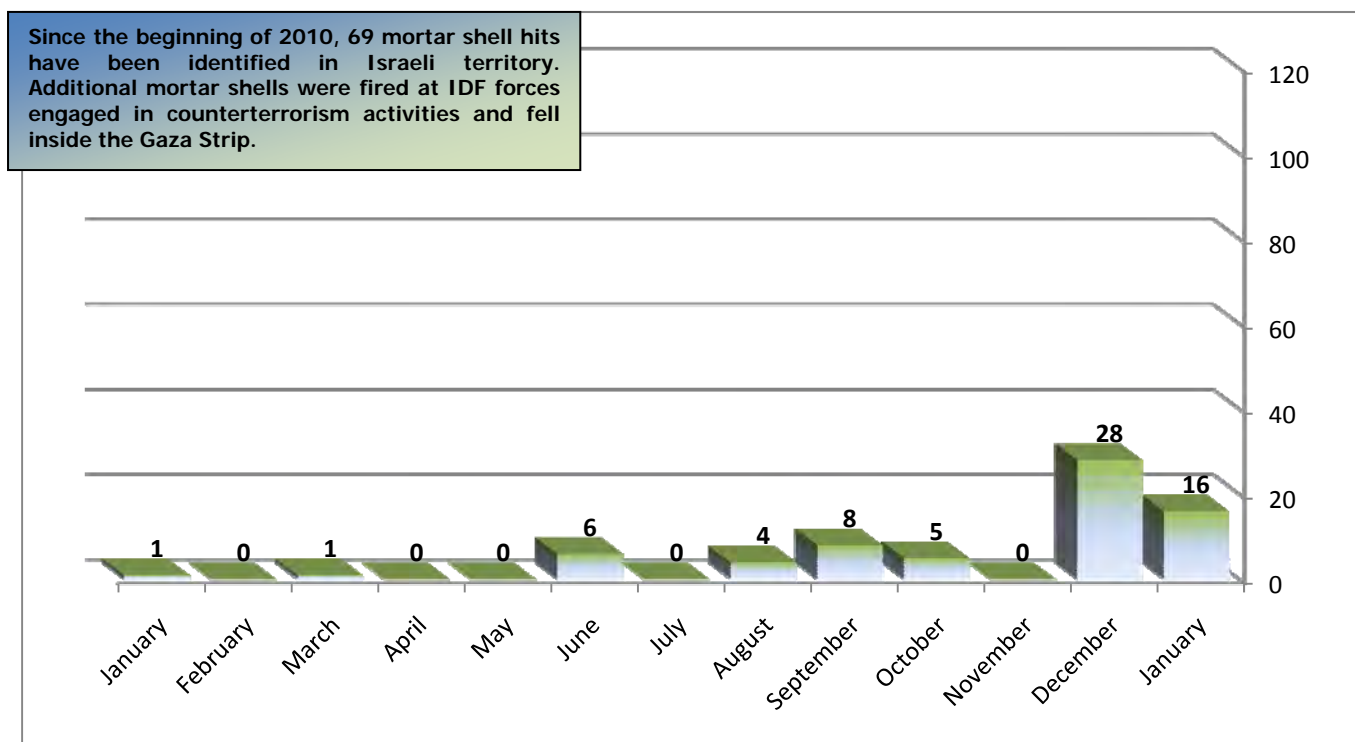


Rocket Fire 2010, Monthly Distribution



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

Mortar Shell Fire 2010, Monthly Distribution



Notes:

* Rocket hits identified in Israeli territory and not in the Gaza Strip.

** As of January 11, 2010.

Israel's Response

■ In response to the rocket and mortar shell fire Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked a number of terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip:

- On **January 10** the Israeli Air Force attacked two terrorist targets in the central Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, January 10, 2011).
- On **January 4** the Israeli Air Force attacked terrorist targets in the central and southern Gaza Strip, including smuggling tunnels (IDF Spokesman, January 5, 2011). The Palestinian media reported that an Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades (Hamas' military wing) training center was attacked. No casualties were reported (Websites of Hamas' Palestine-info website, Wafa News Agency and Ynet, January 6, 2011).

Hamas Continues its Policy of Restrained Rocket Fire

■ The increase in rocket and mortar shell fire also raised apprehensions in the Gaza Strip of escalation. Elements within Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad publicly stressed that Israel's threats did not intimidate the "resistance" [i.e., the terrorist organizations] or undermine its determination. They claimed that the "resistance factions" could defend themselves against any Israeli escalation (Al-Ayam, January 9, 2011).



Operatives of the Jerusalem Battalions, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad's military wing, carry out training exercises (Jerusalem Battalions website, January 9, 2011).

■ However, despite its strong rhetoric, Hamas is apparently trying to calm the situation and force the rogue networks to readopt to its **policy of restrained rocket fire**. Ayman Tahe, a senior Hamas figure in the Gaza Strip, said that Hamas was in contact with the various factions [i.e., terrorist organizations] in the Gaza Strip to "reduce the tension on the ground." He said that Hamas was making a great effort not to enter into a confrontation with Israel. He added that every response to fire had to be carried out as part of a "national consensus" (Qudsnet website, January 9, 2011).

Judea and Samara

Counterterrorism Activities

■ This past week the Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities, detaining Palestinians suspected of terrorist activities and seizing weapons.

■ There were a number of prominent incidents:

- On **January 8** a Palestinian youth broke through a roadblock near Nablus. When he did not obey an order to stop, he was shot and killed. He was discovered to have been carrying two pipe bombs and a knife (Israel Channel 10 TV, January 8, 2011).

- On **January 6** stones were thrown at an Israeli vehicle southwest of Bethlehem. An Israeli civilian woman sustained minor injuries and the vehicle was damaged (IDF Spokesman's website, January 6, 2011).

■ This past week demonstrations and riots continued in the villages of Bila'in and Ni'lin, north of Ramallah. Palestinians, Israeli civilians and foreigners gathered to throw stones at the Israeli security forces. **Sabri Sidam**, former Palestinian Authority communications minister, called on the demonstrators at the friction points participating in the "popular struggle" to equip themselves with cameras and other means of documentation and to transmit the pictures to the news agencies to blacken Israel's name throughout the world (Radio Ajyal, December 31, 2010).

Release and Detention of Hamas Operatives in Judea and Samaria

■ On January 6 the Palestinian Authority released six Hamas operatives who had been holding a hunger strike for a number of weeks to protest their detention. Their release was effected after Hamas turned the issue into a condition for the continuation of contacts for a Fatah-Hamas reconciliation. One of the Hamas operatives detained was Wa'el al-Bitar. He was involved in the double suicide bombing attack in Dimona in February 2008, which killed one Israeli civilian woman and wounded ten other civilians.

■ The day after their release five of the operatives were detained by the Israeli security forces. During their capture a Palestinian was mistakenly shot and killed, having been incorrectly identified as one of the released operatives (IDF Spokesman, January 7, 2011). Hamas spokesmen denounced their detention by Israel and the death of the Palestinian, and blamed the Palestinian Authority for coordinating security with Israel (Hamas' Al-Quds TV, January 7; Hamas' Safa News Agency, January 6, 2011).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Crossings

■ **This past week between 135 and 278 trucks carrying merchandise entered the Gaza Strip every day.** Twenty-four tons of strawberries and 566,7000 flowers meant for export left the Gaza Strip through the crossings into Israel (Website of the Israeli government coordinator for the territories, January 4, 2011). The strawberry growers in the Gaza Strip expressed satisfaction, saying that the current season was markedly better than previous years (Al-Ayam, January 4, 2011).

The De Facto Hamas Administration's New Projects

■ Sources within the de facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip recently stated that a number of construction and infrastructure projects had been begun. The financing for most of

them, in the neighborhood of millions of dollars, comes from various charitable societies in the Arab countries. The projects include:

- **The construction of a new commercial center in the heart of Gaza City:** **Yusef al-Mansi**, public works minister in the Hamas administration, said that it would be "the largest center of its kind" in the Gaza Strip (Hamas' Safa News Agency, January 4, 2011).
- **A housing project:** Al-Mansi announced the completion of a project to renovate 400 buildings and the opening of a skyscraper constructed to house civilians whose homes had been damaged during Operation Cast Lead. The projects were financed by the pro-Hamas Turkish IHH (Website of the Hamas administration's public works ministry, December 16, 2010) and the Al-Rahma Charitable Association (Al-Ayam website, December 4, 2010).
- **The renovation and paving of Gaza City's main street** (Safa News Agency, December 18, 2011).
- **A project for providing water:** According to a source in the Gaza City municipality, in 2010 eighteen wells were dug and a desalination plant was opened (Al-Aqsa TV, December 18, 2010; Hamas' Felesteen, December 31, 2010, Safa News Agency, December 14, 2010).

Palestinian Political Activity

The Palestinian Authority Continues its Activity to Gain International Recognition for a Palestinian State

■ **The Palestinian Authority continues its activity to gain international recognition for a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders.** This past week **Chile** joined several Latin American countries by announcing it would recognize a "free, independent, sovereign" Palestinian state [with no mention of the 1967 borders] (Agence France-Presse, January 7, 2011). Sources in the Palestinian Authority reported that in the near future they hoped to recruit Uruguay, Paraguay, Mexico and Surinam to recognize a Palestinian state (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, January 9, 2011).

Hamas and Palestinian Authority Condemnation of the Demolition of the Shepherd Hotel in East Jerusalem

■ After various delays, on January 9 the demolition the Shepherd Hotel in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem began. It was razed to make way for the construction of a new Jewish neighborhood, planned for 120 families.

■ The hotel's destruction led to strong protests from Palestinian Authority and Hamas spokesmen. The PA's foreign ministry sent a memorandum to various diplomatic missions asking all countries to condemn the Israeli action, which "violated international law and did not serve the interests of peace." Two senior PA figures had the following to say:

● **Nabil Abu Rudeina**, presidential office spokesman, said that Israel did not have the right to build in any part of East Jerusalem and that the step it had taken destroyed the American [peace] efforts and any possibility for returning to the negotiating table (Wafa News Agency, January 9, 2011).

● **Saeb Erekat**, head of the PLO's negotiating team, denounced the demolition of the hotel, claiming that Israeli was destroying Palestinian buildings in an attempt to Judaize Jerusalem and that the Israeli prime minister was changing the situation on the ground to prevent the establishment of "a sovereign Palestinian state." Erekat appealed to the international community to take a firm stand in the matter (Wafa News Agency, January 9, 2011).

Convoys and Flotillas – Update

The Libyan Al-Quds 5 Convoy Reaches the Gaza Strip

■ Some of the activists of the Libyan Al-Quds 5 convoy flew to the El Arish airport in Egypt on January 4 and 5. Each plane held 20 activists and 80 tons of medical and other humanitarian equipment. The equipment entered the Gaza Strip on January 6. Other convoy activists arrived by sea with 50 tons of foodstuffs. The ship unloaded its cargo in the port of El Arish and humanitarian aid in its hold was transferred to the Gaza Strip on January 9 (Al-Ahram, January 4; Al-Quds, January 6; Wafa News Agency, January 9, 2011). **A source in the convoy said that Libya intended to send another convoy, calling it "Marmara Al-Quds"** (Ma'an News Agency, January 6, 2011).

■ During their stay in the Gaza Strip the convoy activists met with Ismail Haniya, head of the de facto Hamas administration, and with Ahmed Bahar, the first deputy to the chairman of the Legislative Council (Safa News Agency, January 8 and 9, 2011).



Left: One of the convoy's trucks (lug.ly website, January 7, 2011). Right: Some of the Al-Quds 5 activists on the gangplank of the ship which sailed to the port of El Arish (quryna.com website, January 7, 2011).



Ismail Haniya, head of the de facto Hamas administration, meets with Al-Quds 5 activists (Safa News Agency, January 7, 2011).

American Delegation Visits the Gaza Strip

- An American delegation visited the Gaza Strip and was received by Ismail Haniya, head of the de facto Hamas administration. The delegation was led by pro-Palestinian Ramsey Clark, former United States Attorney General (Safa News Agency, January 5, 2011).



Ismail Haniya and Ramsey Clark (Islamidavet.com website, January 11; Iran's PressTV, January 6, 2011).

The Asian Flotilla Leaves the Gaza Strip

- Activists of the Asian flotilla Asia 1 left the Gaza Strip on January 7 after a visit of five days. Neither their entrance nor exit was featured by the media. During the visit they participated in

various functions, including a reception by Ismail Haniya, Hamas administration head (January 4, 2011). The activists also met with members of the Hamas health ministry and with relatives of prisoners (Al-Ayam, January 5; Al-Wafed, January 7, 2011).