



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

News of Terrorism and the Israeli- Palestinian Conflict

January 12-18, 2011



Hamas meets with other terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip, one of several such meetings held recently. The meeting's objective was to make the organizations follow Hamas' rocket fire restraint policy (Filastin al-Yawm, January 12, 2011).

Overview

- Hamas continued its efforts to enforce its rocket fire restraint policy on the other terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip as part of a "national consensus" whose intention, it claimed, was to prevent Israel from having an excuse to "start a war."
- Nevertheless, this past week three rocket hits were identified in the western Negev. The Israeli Air Force attacked a number of terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip, including a Palestinian Islamic Jihad operative who was involved in planning attacks in Israeli territory.
- The Palestinian Authority continued its diplomatic activities to gain international recognition for a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders. This past week Guyana joined the Latin American countries which have already recognized the Palestinian state. Palestinian officials are of the opinion that during 2011 most of the world's countries will recognize the Palestinian state, and have expressed hope that it will be accepted into the United Nations.

Important Events

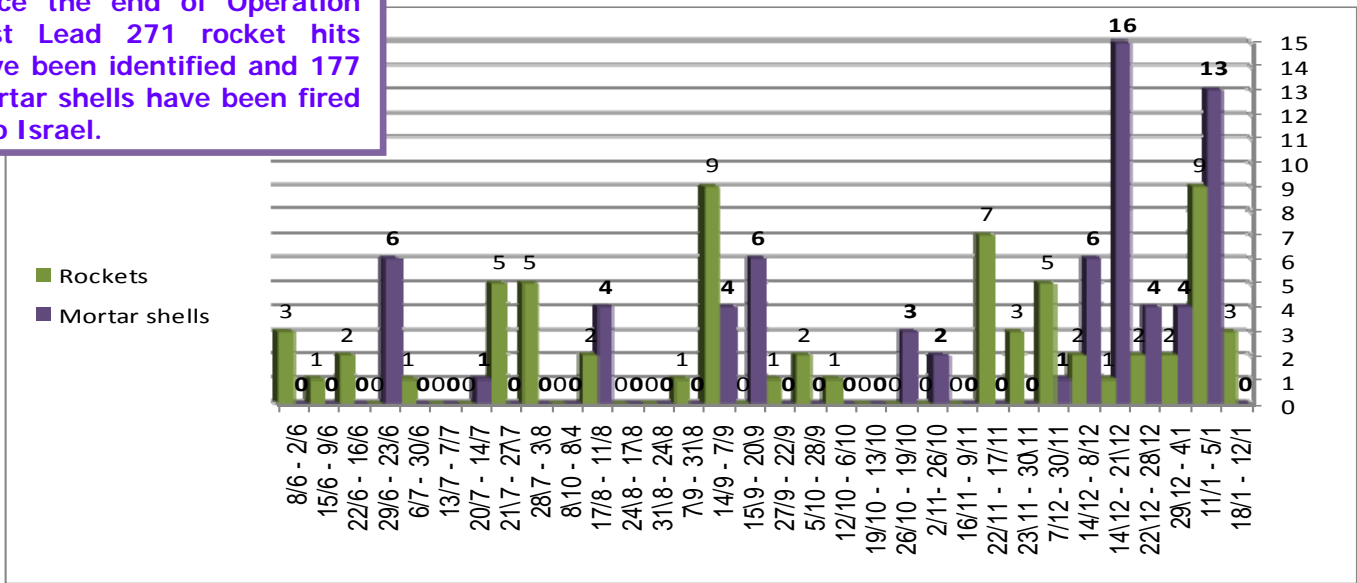
The Gaza Strip

Rocket Fire

■ This past week the amount of rocket fire into the Gaza Strip decreased, in our assessment following Hamas' enforcement of its rocket fire restraint policy. Three rocket hits were identified in the western Negev (on January 11, 17 and 18). The rockets fell in open areas. There were no casualties and no damage was done.

Rockets and mortar shells fired into Israeli territory¹

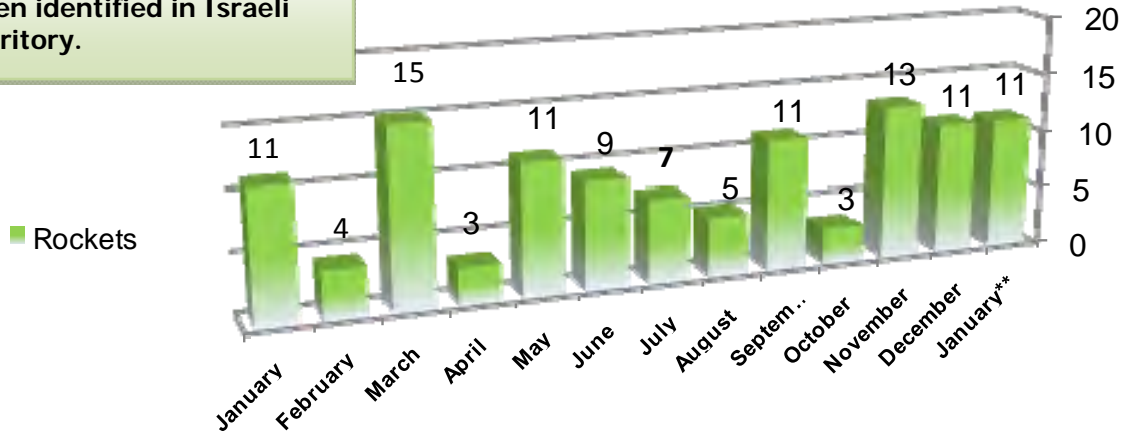
Since the end of Operation Cast Lead 271 rocket hits have been identified and 177 mortar shells have been fired into Israel.



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 -- Monthly Distribution

Since the beginning of 2010, 114 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory.

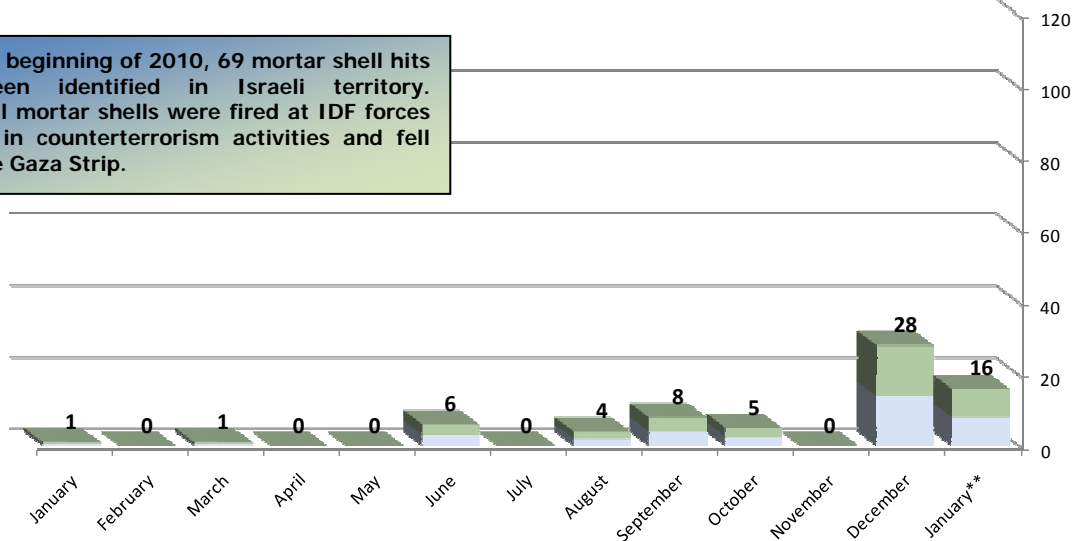


* Rocket hits identified in Israeli territory and not in the Gaza Strip.

** As of January 18, 2011.

Mortar Shell Fire -- Monthly Distribution

Since the beginning of 2010, 69 mortar shell hits have been identified in Israeli territory. Additional mortar shells were fired at IDF forces engaged in counterterrorism activities and fell inside the Gaza Strip.



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

** As of January 18, 2011.

Israeli Air Force Attacks

■ On January 11, in response to the rocket fire, Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked a number of terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian media reported an attack on a naval police station which had been struck previously during Operation Cast Lead. There was also an attack on an Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades (Hamas' military wing) post in the southern Gaza Strip and one on a Jerusalem Battalions (the Palestinian Islamic Jihad's military wing) post in the western part of Khan Yunis (Qudsnet and Ma'an News Agency, January 12, 2011).

■ On January 11 Israeli Air Force aircraft also attacked and killed Muhammad Najjar, a Palestinian Islamic Jihad operative who was riding a motorcycle near Khan Yunis. He had been involved in planning terrorist attacks in Israel (IDF Spokesman's website, January 11, 2011).

Hamas Continues Its Rocket Fire Restraint Policy

■ The heads of Hamas publicly expressed worry over the escalation of rocket and mortar shell fire from the Gaza Strip and tried to calm the situation. **The Palestinian and Arab media reported that Hamas was finding it increasingly difficult to enforce its policy of restraining rocket fire on the other terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip.** According to the media report, there were "stormy" meetings between Hamas and representatives of the other Palestinian factions [i.e., terrorist organizations]. The organizations refused to commit themselves to a lull in the fighting with Israel, claiming that there was no lull in the first place, and that Israel's activities were a "kind of war." **The media also reported that Hamas deployed plainclothes operatives along the border with Israel to prevent rocket fire** (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, January 11, 2011).

■ **Senior Hamas sources said the following:**

- **Ismail Haniya**, head of the de facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip, called the events currently taking place in the Gaza Strip **"a war of attrition."** He claimed that **he had received information from the Egyptian authorities that if the rocket fire from the Gaza Strip into Israel did not stop, Israel might start a war.** He called on all the terrorist organizations operating in the Gaza Strip to meet and reach an agreement to prevent the situation from escalating (Safa News Agency, January 16, 2011).
- **The interior ministry of the de facto Hamas administration** reported that Ismail Haniya had met with senior figures in its internal security apparatus and instructed them **to enforce the "national consensus"** [i.e., the policy of rocket fire restraint]. According to reports in the media from the Gaza Strip, **Hamas' internal security forces deployed at the intersections leading to the border with Israel in the**

northern and southern Gaza Strip, and were examining vehicles and making their presence felt on the ground (BBC and the website of Hamas' interior ministry, January 13, 2011).



The meeting held by Ismail Haniya, head of the de facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip (Safa News Agency, January 13, 2011).

- **Taher al-Nunu**, spokesman for the Hamas administration, said that **Hamas was calling on the various factions to honor the "national consensus"** [i.e., to restrain their rocket fire into Israeli territory]. He said that the "consensus" was for the good of the entire Palestinian people (Hamas' Palestine-info website, January 11, 2011).
- **Muhammad al-Hindi**, a senior figure in the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, claimed that the probability of Israel's starting a large-scale attack against the Gaza Strip was low, but that in his opinion Israel would carry out an activity of "limited scope" deep within the Gaza Strip. **He said that he had recently spoken with representatives of the Palestinian factions that they had agreed to cease firing rockets.** However, he said, they had not agreed to stop firing mortar shells (Al-Quds Al-Arabi, January 12, 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 (IDF Spokesman's website, January 18, 2011).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Crossings

■ **This past week between 164 and 361 trucks carrying merchandise entered the Gaza Strip every day.** In addition, 26 tons of strawberries and 759,630 flowers meant for export left the Gaza Strip through the crossings into Israel (Website of the Israeli government coordinator for the territories, January 18, 2011).

■ In view of Israel's intention to close the Karni crossing and allow passage only through the enlarged Kerem Shalom crossing, the de facto Hamas administration's agriculture ministry lodged a protest, as did representatives of the Gaza Strip's private sector. The agriculture ministry claimed that such a move would tighten the closure on the Gaza Strip and was likely to prevent the entrance of animal feed. A group called the Coordinating Council of the Private Sector in the Gaza Strip claimed that such a situation would make it difficult to bring in building materials because the Kerem Shalom crossing was not suitable. In protest the council organized a cavalcade of dozens of trucks in front of the crossing. It also appealed to the international community to intervene (Ma'an News Agency, January 11; Al-Ayam, January 12, 2011). **Note:** In recent weeks IDF forces were shot at a number of times in the Karni crossing region.²

■ **Residents of the Gaza Strip have complained that the de facto Hamas administration discriminates against them in favor of its activists and supporters and makes it difficult for non-supporters to obtain visas for Egypt through the Rafah crossing.** They also accuse Hamas functionaries of taking bribes. The residents say that many students studying in colleges and universities in Egypt are subject to discrimination and not permitted to leave the Gaza Strip for their studies. They also say that sick people in need of medical treatment in the West Bank suffer from discrimination (Pal-Press, November 30, 2010).

Palestinian Political Activity

Palestinian Authority Political Activity for the International Recognition of a Palestinian State within the 1967 Borders Continues

■ **This past week as well the Palestinian Authority continued its political activity to gain international recognition for a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders.** This week **Guyana** also announced its recognition of the state (Website of Guyana's foreign

² For example, on December 6, 2010, the Karni crossing was closed after an IDF force patrolling nearby was shot at. For further information, see the December 7, 2010 bulletin "News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, December 1-7, 2010" at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/ipc_e148.pdf.

ministry, January 13, 2011). **Mahmoud Abbas**, Palestinian Authority chairman, thanked Guyana for its recognition (Wafa News Agency, January 14, 2011). **Peru** also announced it would recognize the Palestinian state in the up-coming weeks (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, January 11, 2011).

■ Following the announcements, sources in the Palestinian Authority expressed optimism and said they were of the opinion that within a number of months most of the countries of the world would recognize the Palestinian state:

- **Salam Fayyad**, Palestinian Authority prime minister, said he hoped the Palestinian state would be established in 2011 and become a member state of the United Nations. He said that negotiations were only one phase of the peace process, which also included the establishment of the future state's political institutions and international recognition of the Palestinian state. He also said that the Palestinians were determined to advance various projects, including the construction of an airport, despite Israel's objections (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, January 13 and 14, 2011).

- **Riyadh al-Maliki**, Palestinian Authority foreign minister, said that in his estimation, by July 2011 most of the countries of the world would have recognized the Palestinian state (Al-Ayam, January 10, 2011). **Nabil Shaath**, member of Fatah's central committee, said that international recognition of the Palestinian state was an important step and claimed that within three months all 34 Latin American countries would recognize it. He said that the Palestinians would appeal to "every international organization" to "pursue Israel and make it accountable for its actions" (Al-Quds website, January 16, 2011).

■ On another note, the UN's Arab block met on January 17 to confirm the final version of a proposed Security Council resolution concerning settlements (Wafa News Agency, January 17, 2011).

Reactions to the Uprising in Tunisia

■ The revolution in Tunisia produced a wave of reactions: While the Palestinian Authority made do with expressing support for the Tunisian people, Hamas exploited the events to attack the Palestinian Authority and the pro-Western Arab countries. The Hamas media and spokesmen (most of them unofficial) represented the uprising as the victory of a popular intifada over a corrupt, dictatorial regime which had declared war on Islam and was supported by the West.

■ **The response of the Palestinian Authority:** Mahmoud Abbas' advisor for PLO affairs sent a congratulatory note from the Palestinian people to Tunisia and condolences to the families of the victims and the Tunisian people. He said that the Palestinian Authority would maintain good relations with Tunisia. A demonstration in support of the revolution was held in Ramallah in front of the Tunisian embassy (Wafa News Agency, January 15, 2011).

■ **Hamas and the other terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip expressed support for the Tunisian revolution, and exploited it to verbally attack the Palestinian Authority, Israel and the United States.**

- **Fathi Hamad**, interior minister of the de facto Hamas administration, said that Hamas supported the Tunisian people who were choosing their leaders, and considered the revolution in Tunisia as an expression as the will of an oppressed people.
- **Sami Abu Zuhri**, Hamas spokesman, said it was the right of the Tunisian people to choose their leaders democratically (Website of the Hamas administration interior ministry and Hamas' Palestine-info website, January 15, 2011).
- **Fathi Al-Qara'wi**, a Hamas member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, wrote an article in which he represented the Tunisian revolution as "an enormous achievement," **a victory for "virtue and religion [i.e., Islam]" over those who were fighting them.** He claimed that the Tunisian "dictator" criminally allowed only those [Islamic] religious precepts which he considered fitting [to be implemented]. For example, **he said that the hijab [women's head covering] was forbidden, as was polygamy.** He said [hinting at the Palestinian Authority and various western states] that in his opinion the revolution proved that "the people" could bring about change, and that **all the rulers of the Arab "dictatorships" who thought the United States, Israel and the West would protect them should know how flimsy their positions were.** He added that "the era of the people has begun" and that when "the violence of their people" broke out the support of the West would not avail them (Hamas' Palestine-info website, January 16, 2011).
- **The Palestinian Islamic Jihad** organized a march in Gaza City in support of the Tunisian revolution. The PIJ congratulated the Tunisian people for having "taken its freedom by force." The PIJ also said it hoped that "the blood of the free people" from Tunisia would support the Palestinians and the rest of the people around the world in their struggle against Israel and the United States (Hamas' Paltoday website, January 15, 2011).



A Palestinian Islamic Jihad march to express solidarity with the Tunisian revolution (Paltoday website, January 15, 2011).



The extreme leftist groups in the Gaza Strip demonstrate in support of the revolution in Tunisia (Safa News Agency, January 18, 2011).

Convoys and Flotillas – Update

An American-Based International Feminist Leftist Organization Is Organizing a Delegation to the Gaza Strip

- An American leftist feminist organization called Code Pink, which has already sent a number of delegations to the Gaza Strip, is making preparations to send another women's delegation, expected to arrive on January 30, 2011 (Code Pink website, January 11, 2011).