



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

News of Terrorism and the Israeli- Palestinian Conflict

January 19-25, 2011



Demonstrators set fire to an Israeli flag with "Al-Jazeera" written on it. The demonstration took place in front of the channel's offices in Ramallah following the publication of documents dealing with the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, leading to accusations that the Palestinian Authority was willing to make sweeping concessions to Israel (Hamas' Safa News Agency, January 24, 2011).

Overview

- Hamas continues its policy of rocket fire restraint and made efforts to enforce the policy on the other terrorist organizations. However, one rocket hit was identified in the western Negev.
- Al-Jazeera TV leaked documents dealing with the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, leading to accusations that the PA was making sweeping concessions to Israel on the core issues (Jerusalem and the refugees). Senior PA figures claimed that the documents were "a deliberate mix" of Israeli and Palestinian propositions and accused Al-Jazeera TV of an incitement campaign which served Israel and was intended to delegitimize the PA and its leader.

Important Terrorism Events

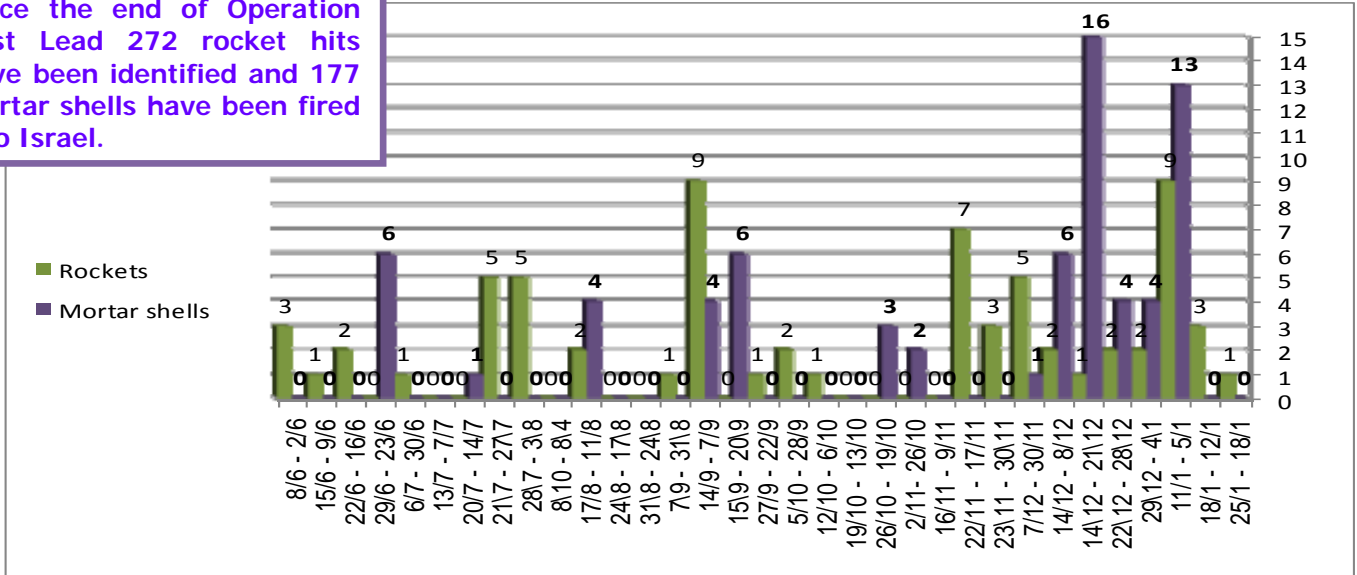
The Gaza Strip

Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire

■ **This past week there was a decline in rocket fire, in our assessment the result of Hamas' enforcement activity.** One rocket hit was identified (January 21). The rocket fell in an open area in the western Negev. There were no casualties and no damage was done. A network calling itself "the group of the uniqueness of Allah and jihad" claimed responsibility for the attack (Internet forum of Ansar al-Mujahadeen, January 22, 2011).

Rockets and mortar shells fired into Israeli territory¹

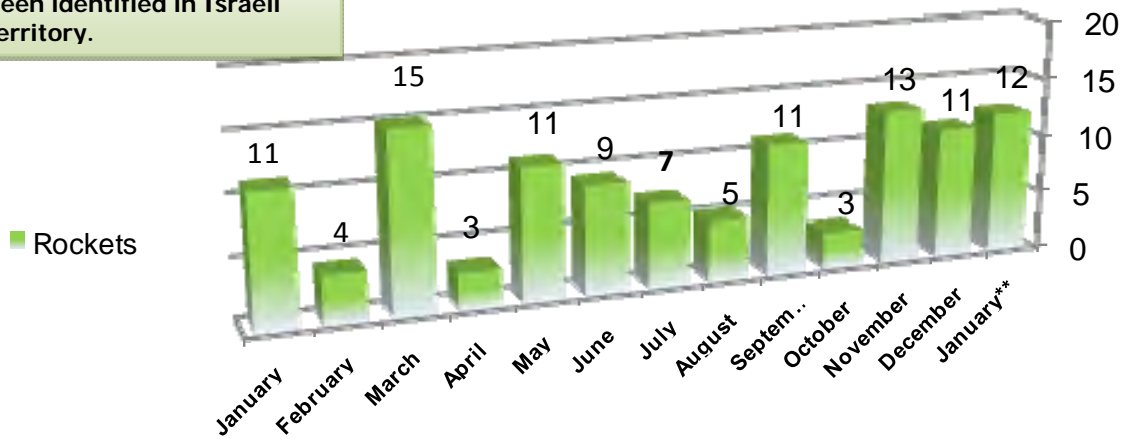
Since the end of Operation Cast Lead 272 rocket hits have been identified and 177 mortar shells have been fired into Israel.



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, 115 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory.

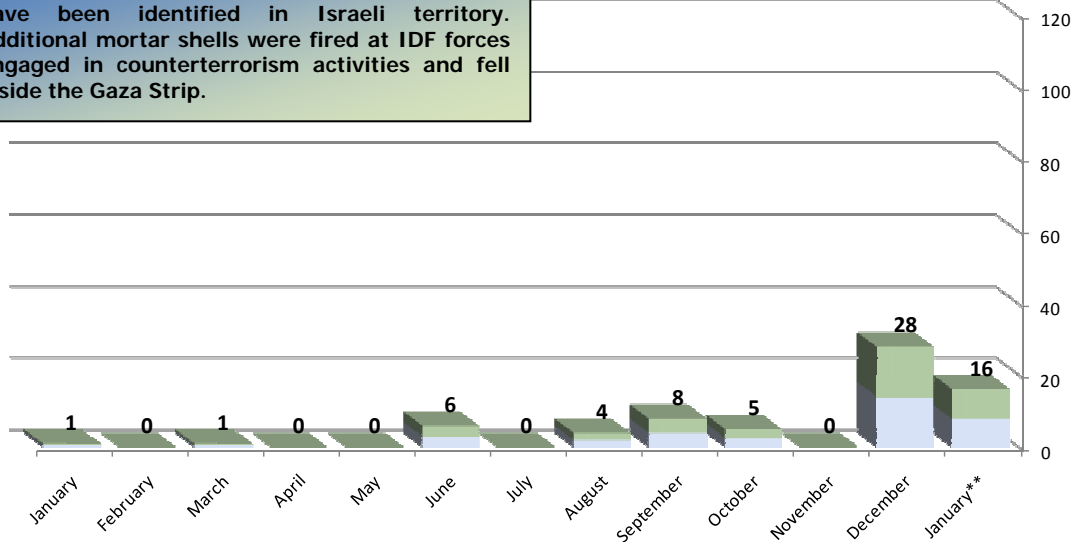


* Rocket hits identified in Israeli territory and not in the Gaza Strip.

** As of January 25, 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 25, 2011.

Hamas Continues its Policy of Rocket Fire Restraint

■ **Palestinian Islamic Jihad spokesman Daoud Shihab** said that **Hamas' security forces** in the Gaza Strip were **enforcing a lull** and focusing on ongoing security activities along the border with Israel. He added that no confrontation between Hamas and operatives of other organizations was expected. He said that at a recent meeting of the organizations in the Gaza Strip **they had agreed on a lull in rocket attacks against Israel**, especially since they feared an Israeli reprisal (Al-Jarida website, January 18, 2011). **Muhammad al-Hindi**, a member of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad's political bureau, said that **the agreement included a cessation of rocket attacks and that his organization was committed to it** (Al-Watan, January 20, 2011).

Judea and Samaria

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 25, 2011).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Crossings

■ This past week between 86 and 183 trucks carrying merchandise entered the Gaza Strip every day. In addition, 568 tons of cooking gas and several thousand liters of gasoline and diesel fuel were brought into the Gaza Strip. Moreover, 31.6 tons of strawberries, 3.3 tons of peppers and 375,900 flowers meant for export left the Gaza Strip though the crossings into Israel (Website of the Israeli government coordinator for the territories, January 25, 2011).

Israeli Commitments to the Gaza Strip

■ Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, meeting with the French foreign minister who is currently visiting the region, said that Israel intended to cut its infrastructure ties with the Gaza Strip, especially regarding supplies of water and electricity. In response a Hamas spokesman claimed that "the Gaza Strip is under Israeli jurisdiction both legally and administratively," and therefore, according to international law, Israel has to "supply the needs of the people." He called for the intervention of the international community (Hamas' Palestine-info website, January 22, 2011).

Egypt Accuses the Army of Islam of Involvement in the Attack on the Coptic Church

■ **Habib el-Adly**, Egyptian interior minister, accused the Palestinian Army of Islam,² a network operating in the Gaza Strip which has affiliated itself with the global jihad, of carrying out the attack on the Coptic church in Alexandria on New Year's Eve. The attack resulted in the deaths of 25 civilians and wounded scores of others. In addition, the Egyptian media accused the Army of Islam of involvement in other terrorist attacks carried out in Egypt in recent years.

■ **El-Adly claimed that the information was received following the detention of an Egyptian operative with connections to the Army of Islam.** In response Abu Khitab, a senior Army of Islam figure, said that his organization did not operate on Egyptian soil and claimed that it was an Israeli "conspiracy" meant to rally support for a new war against the Gaza Strip (Egyptian TV and Al-Risala, January 23, 2011).

(Organized?) Protests in the Gaza Strip during the French Foreign Minister's Visit

■ French Foreign Minister Michele Alliot-Marie visited Israel and the Gaza Strip. In Israel she met with the parents of abducted Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, and according to the media, allegedly called the abduction a "war crime." Senior Hamas figures strongly denounced her alleged remarks. Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** called her statement "favoring the occupation" and reflecting France's double standard (Hamas' Palestine-info website, January 20, 2011). **The French foreign ministry claimed that she had not made the remarks attributed to her** (Website of the French foreign ministry, January 23, 2011).

■ The following day, January 21, when the minister arrived in the Gaza Strip she was met by a series of protests and demonstrations (possibly organized by Hamas). They were attended by family members of the Palestinian terrorists imprisoned in Israel, who blocked her path and threw shoes at her (Hamas' Palestine-info website, Radio Sawt al-Quds and Al-Manar TV, January 21, 2011). Saeb Erekat, head of the PLO's negotiating team, **later claimed that the minister had told Mahmoud Abbas that she had been misquoted and her intention had been that the two sides had to swap prisoners** (Voice of Palestine Radio, January 23, 2011).

² The Army of Islam (*Jaish al-Islam*) was founded in the Gaza Strip in 2006 by Mumtaz Dugmush, a member of the powerful Dugmush clan based in the Al-Sabra neighborhood in Gaza City. Dugmush and his supporters broke away from the Popular Resistance Committees and founded the Army of Islam, which was apparently joined by former Hamas Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operatives. Since Operation Cast Lead the Army of Islam has tried to carry out showcase attacks against Israel and foreign targets, including targets in the Sinai Peninsula.



Left: Palestinian demonstrators block the path of the French foreign minister to protest statements she made about the abduction of Gilad Shalit. Right: One of the shoes thrown at her car (Hamas' Safa News Agency, January 21, 2011).

The Political Arena

PA Activity in the Security Council

- The Palestinian Authority continues to promote a resolution in the Security Council to condemn the settlements. On January 18 the UN's Arab block proposed the resolution. **Riyadh Mansour**, the Palestinian representative to the United Nations, said that 122 member states had signed the proposal and it had received the support of 14 of the Security Council's 15 members. He said the Palestinians did not intend to retract the proposal. However, he said, only when the Palestinians were sure the Americans would not use their veto would the proposal be put to a vote (Al-Sharq al-Awsat, January 22, 2011).
- "United Nations diplomats" said that the vote would not be carried out before February 5 (Reuters, January 19, 2011). Senior figures in the Palestinian Authority said that the PA was trying to convince the United States to support the resolution (Al-Watan and Al-Quds Al-Arabi, January 20, 2011).

The PA Continues Promoting International Recognition of a Palestinian State within the 1967 Borders

- The Palestinian Authority continues its diplomatic campaign to promote international recognition of a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders. **Peru joined the Latin American countries** which have recognized a "free, independent Palestinian state." On January 19 the Palestinian representative in the United States hung the PLO flag on the Palestinian Authority mission building in Washington DC. Phillip Crowley, State Department spokesman, said that it did not change its legal status (i.e., did not grant the mission the status of an embassy) (US Department of State website, January 18, 2011).

■ Palestinian Authority chairman **Mahmoud Abbas** claimed that the freeze of the negotiations would not lead to a new, violent intifada or a military confrontation, but **would probably lead to "popular protests."** He said that at this point the Palestinians were not considering the unilateral declaration of a state. He added that they were making an effort so that **by September 2011**, the date set by President Obama for the end of the negotiations, **preparations for Palestinian institutions would be complete and ready for the declaration of a state, and "Palestine" would be accepted as a member state by the United Nations** (Al-Jazeera TV, January 21, 2011).

■ **Saeb Erekat, chief of the PLO's negotiating team**, responded to news reports that Israeli Foreign Minister Lieberman had put together a Palestinian state with temporary borders. He claimed that Israel was not serious about any aspect of making peace with the Palestinians and said that the Palestinians would not agree to interim agreements about a state with temporary borders (Voice of Palestine Radio, Qudsnet and Haaretz, January 23, 2011).

Russian President's Remarks during a Visit to the Palestinian Authority

■ Russian President Medvedev, visiting the Palestinian Authority on January 18, said that Russia had recognized the Palestinian state in 1988 and its position was unchanged. Visiting Jordan the following day, he said that Russia would discuss with Israel the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. He added that it would not be possible to resolve the Palestinian issue without consulting Israel and all the other factors involved in the conflict, and only after consultation would Russia decide how to support the Palestinians (RIA Novosti and the website of the Russian foreign ministry, January 19, 2011).

The Internal Palestinian Arena

Al-Jazeera TV Leaks Documents Relating to the Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations

■ On January 21 Al-Jazeera TV and the British Guardian leaked a series of documents dealing with the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Other documents, a total of 1,600, are expected to be gradually revealed (Guardian, January 25, Al-Jazeera TV, January 21, 2011). Their publication led to the Palestinian Authority's being accused of making concessions to Israel with long-term implications regarding the core issues, mainly Jerusalem and the refugees. Their publication embarrassed the Palestinian Authority, and Hamas and other terrorist organizations are using the issue to defame the PA. Some initial reactions were the following:

■ The Palestinian Authority:

- Palestinian Authority chairman **Mahmoud Abbas** claimed that the documents were a **"deliberate mixture" of Israeli and Palestinian proposals**, and that the information contained therein had previously been presented to the Arab states, as had all the details of all the negotiations or proposals (Wafa News Agency, January 24, 2011).
- **Nabil Shaath**, interviewed by Al-Jazeera TV, confirmed that the documents were authentic, but he said they were not official and did not commit the Palestinians. He complained that while the Palestinian Authority was currently doing everything it could to remove the "legitimacy of the Israeli occupation, what the Israelis call the delegitimization of Israel, Al-Jazeera is making an effort to delegitimize the Palestinians" (Al-Jazeera TV, January 24, 2011).
- **Yasser Abd Rabbo**, a member of the PLO's executive committee, did not discuss the documents' authenticity, but **claimed that Al-Jazeera TV had distorted the facts or had taken them out of context**, and presented its viewers with a different version of the situation. **He accused Al-Jazeera and the government of Qatar of collaborating with Israel against the Palestinian Authority**. He claimed the Palestinian Authority knew who had leaked the documents and would take steps against them (Palestinian Authority TV, January 24, 2011).
- **Abu Alaa**, head of the PLO's Jerusalem affairs department, called the leak **"an incitement campaign" against the Palestinian Authority** and denied their authenticity (Wafa News Agency, January 24, 2011).
- **Riyadh al-Maliki**, Palestinian Authority foreign minister, wondered about the timing of the leak and **accused Al-Jazeera TV of "choosing to serve Israel"** which was, he claimed, waging a campaign to weaken the head of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas (Wafa News Agency, January 24, 2011).

■ The Palestinian media reported that the Palestinian Authority's security forces were deployed should there be protest marches in the West Bank. They also reported that Mahmoud Abbas did not rule out the possibility of closing Al-Jazeera TV's offices in Judea and Samaria. Following their leak **dozens of Palestinian demonstrated in front of Al-Jazeera TV's offices in Ramallah and tried to break in. They burned an Israeli flag inscribed with the channel's name and walked on a Star of David with "Al-Jazeera" written in the center** (Wafa News Agency, January 24, 2011).



Left: Sign equating Al-Jazeera TV with Israel, held during a demonstration against Al-Jazeera TV in front of the channel's offices in Ramallah. Right: Demonstrators standing on a Star of David with "Al-Jazeera" in the center (Hamas' Safa News Agency, January 24, 2011). The Palestinian Authority accused Al-Jazeera TV and the government of Qatar for collaborating with Israel to weaken Mahmoud Abbas.

■ Hamas and the other terrorist organizations:

- Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** claimed that the documents proved **an Israeli-Palestinian Authority "conspiracy" whose objective was to "destroy the Palestinian cause"** (Hamas' Palestine-info website, January 23, 2011).
- Senior Hamas figure **Osama Hamdan** claimed that the documents proved that the worries of the Palestinians and the "resistance" [i.e., the terrorist organizations] were correct and that **those conducting negotiations were unreliable** and were therefore not authorized to conduct negotiations with Israel for the Palestinians. He added that senior Palestinian Authority figures had not denied the documents' authenticity (CNN, January 24, 2011).
- The **Popular Resistance Committees** issued a statement to the effect that "whoever gives up a grain of the soil [of "Palestine"]" is not part of the national camp, since **"all Palestine belongs to Palestinians."** Mahmoud Abbas and his followers, according to the statement, "represent only themselves" (Qawm website, January 23, 2011).
- **Nafez Azzam, a member of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad's political bureau,** said that in light of the affair, **"resistance" [i.e., terrorism and violence] is the only path to restore the "Palestinians' rights"** (PIJ Paltoday website, January 24, 2011).

Convoys and Flotillas to the Gaza Strip – Update

The Turkel Commission Report and Initial Reactions³

- On January 23 the Turkel Commission issued the first part of its report. The commission investigated the issue of the Israeli takeover of the flotilla, during which IDF forces were attacked by operatives belonging to the Turkish IHH. The commission considered the blockade of the Gaza Strip and **determined that it was in accordance the rules of international law**. With all issues relating to the flotilla the commission determined that the takeover of the ship was carried out **in accordance with international law**. That was because if the vessel's intention was to violate the naval blockade of the Gaza Strip, **it was permissible to take control of it even if it were in international waters**. The commission determined that the IDF had not taken into consideration a scenario of an organized force armed with deadly weapons which would actively oppose an attempt to board the ship.

- **The report places responsibility for the violent events aboard the *Mavi Marmara* on the members of the Turkish organization IHH** and claims that the organization's operatives did not act in self defense but rather "the opposition to the [Israeli] soldiers boarding the boat was premeditated and violent in the extreme, and not characteristic of civil disobedience." By acting in that fashion, the report claims, **the operatives lost their special status as civilians during the time they resisted**. The commission quoted testimony taken from IDF soldiers who participated in the takeover of the ship. One of the, the first who descended from the helicopter to the upper deck of the *Mavi Marmara*, said that a mob attacked him and tried to lynch him. He said that the IHH operatives choked him and tried to gouge out his eyes, and that he feared for his life (Haaretz, January 24; Ynet, January 23, 2011).

- **Turkey's response:** Erdogan, the Turkish prime minister, said that he was "amazed and disappointed." **He rejected the credibility of the Turkel Commission Report and called it "worthless."** Other senior Turkish figures did not express an opinion about the report claiming not to have yet seen it, but said that the prime minister's reaction was representative of Turkish public opinion and that the government of Turkey accepted the conclusions of the Turkish report, which claimed that Israel had violated international law and used excessive force (Haaretz and Al-Manar TV, January 24, 2011). The Turkish inquiry commission responded

³ Information can be found at <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/israel-s-gaza-flotilla-probe-idf-soldiers-acted-in-self-defense-1.338711>. For further information see the January 23, 2011 bulletin, "Detailed testimony from IDF officers and soldiers, supported by documentation, reveals for the first time the aggressive, brutal fighting carried out by IHH operatives and their accomplices against Israeli forces aboard the Mavi Marmara" at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/ipc_e162.pdf

that it was "surprised, shocked and anxious" because of the reports conclusions, which "clear" Israel's name.

■ **IHH's response:** IHH leader Bülent Yildirim rejected the Turkel Commission's conclusion and called its members "stupid." He claimed that according to international law the Israelis were criminals. He said a large majority of Turks think IHH's struggle against is just. He claimed that even the Turkish Jewish community thought the Turkel report contained "nonsense" (Al-Jazeera TV, January 24, 2011).

■ **Hamas' response:** Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum said that Hamas totally opposed any commission of enquiry which would investigate the events aboard the *Mavi Marmara*. **He called the commission a "fake" and said that it was not "logical" that a criminal not be tried.** He said Hamas supported the Turkish government and its "adherence to its positions" regarding Israel, and called for an international legal system to intervene and try the "perpetrators of the crime" (Al-Risala, January 23, 2011).

Other Flotilla and Convoy Updates

■ **Activists participating in the Libyan convoy Al-Quds 5** (some of whom had previously arrived by air at the beginning of January) entered the Gaza Strip on January 22 after their ship was delayed on the high seas for ten days. Seventeen activists were welcomed by senior Hamas figures, including Ismail Haniya, head of the de facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip, and Mahmoud al-Zahar. The convoy brought medicines, ambulances, wheelchairs and baby food (Hamas' Palestine-info website, January 22; Ma'an News Agency, January 19, 2011).

■ **The upgraded flotilla, Freedom Fleet 2:** Amin Abu Rashad, affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood and coordinator of the European Campaign to End the Siege on Gaza, said that the upgraded flotilla organized by the anti-Israeli coalition would **set sail in April 2011**. It would include 1,500 activists and **more than 20 ships, one of which would be the *Mavi Marmara***. He said the ships would set sail from various European countries, Canada and the United States.