



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

News of Terrorism and the Israeli- Palestinian Conflict

January 26-February 1, 2011



The site of the Grad rocket hit in the southern Israeli town of Netivot (Photo by Yehuda Lahiani, courtesy of NRG, January 31, 2011).

Overview

- In view of the uprising in Egypt, prominent this past week were the three rockets fired into Israeli territory from the Gaza Strip, two of them standard Grad rockets. One hit the town of Netivot, the other, the town of Ofakim.
- Throughout January the high level of rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip continued (15 hits), after 13 and 11 hits in November and December 2010, respectively. In December and January there was also a significant increase in mortar shell fire (17 and 28 hits, respectively, compared with sporadic hits during previous months).
- Hamas is following the events in Egypt closely while keeping a low media profile. Following the mass escapes from Egyptian prisons, the Arab-Palestinian media reported that a number of imprisoned Hamas operatives had escaped. It was reported that some of them had already reached the Gaza Strip and that others were en route.

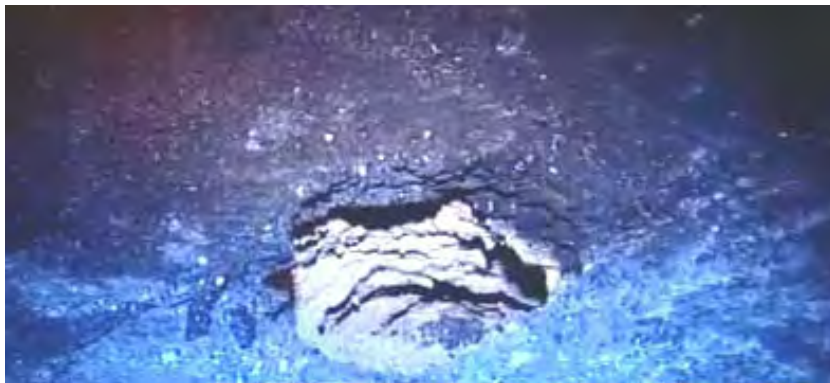
Important Terrorism Events

Gaza Strip

Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire

■ **This past week three rocket hits were identified in the western Negev, two of them standard Grad rockets.** The Grad rockets were fired on the night of January 31, 2011, and **fell in open areas in the southern Israeli towns of Netivot (close to a site where a wedding was being held) and Ofakim.** Four people went into shock and several vehicles were damaged (Picture courtesy of Israel Channel 10 news, January 31, 2011). The last time a Grad rocket was identified in Israeli territory was in November 2010.

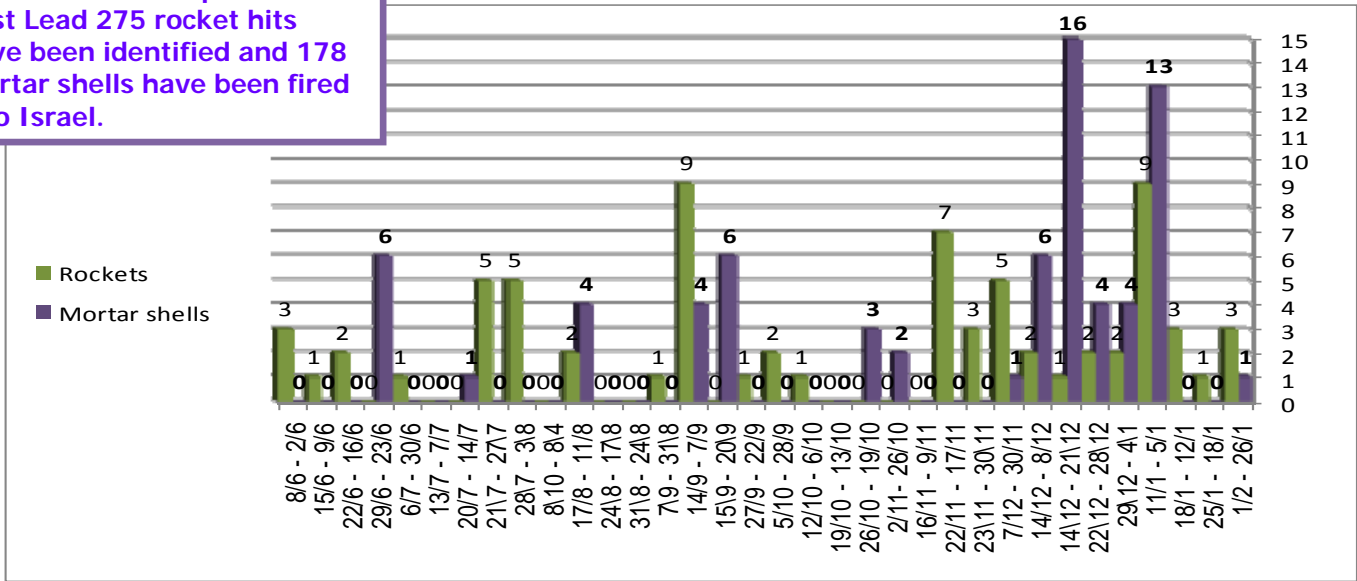
■ **This past week there was one mortar shell hit** (January 31, 2011). The shell fell in an open area in the western Negev. There were no casualties and no damage was done.



The site of one of the Grad rocket hits
(Picture courtesy of Israel Channel 10 news, January 31, 2011).

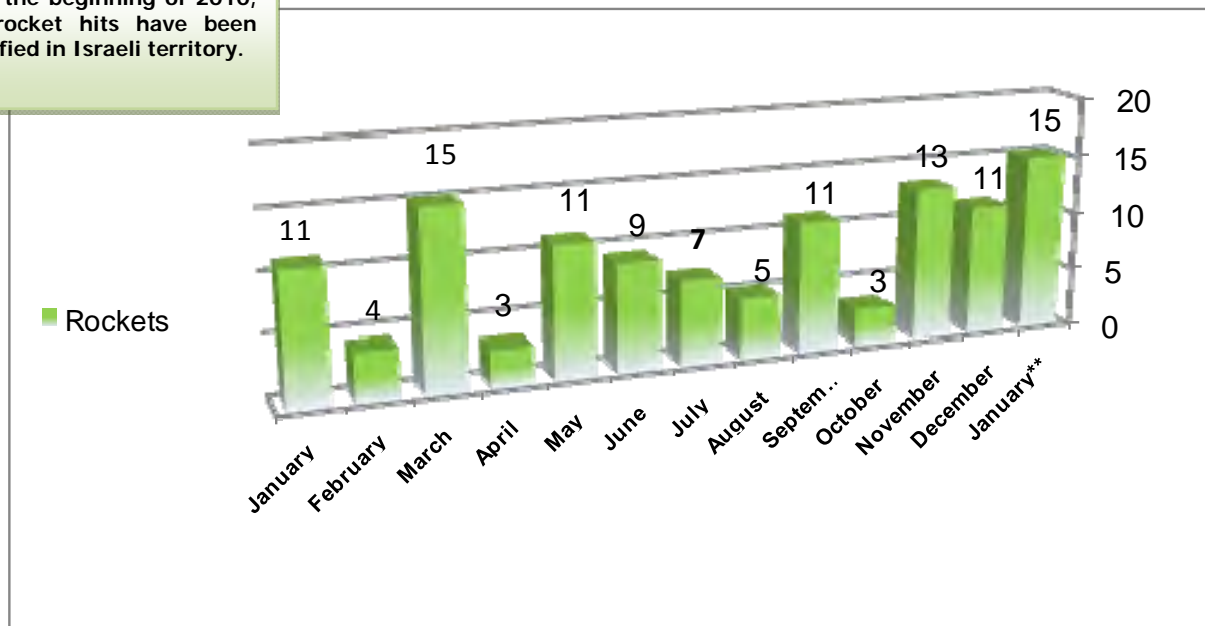
Rockets and mortar shells fired into Israeli territory¹

Since the end of Operation Cast Lead 275 rocket hits have been identified and 178 mortar shells have been fired into Israel.



Rocket Fire -- Monthly Distribution

Since the beginning of 2010, 118 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory.

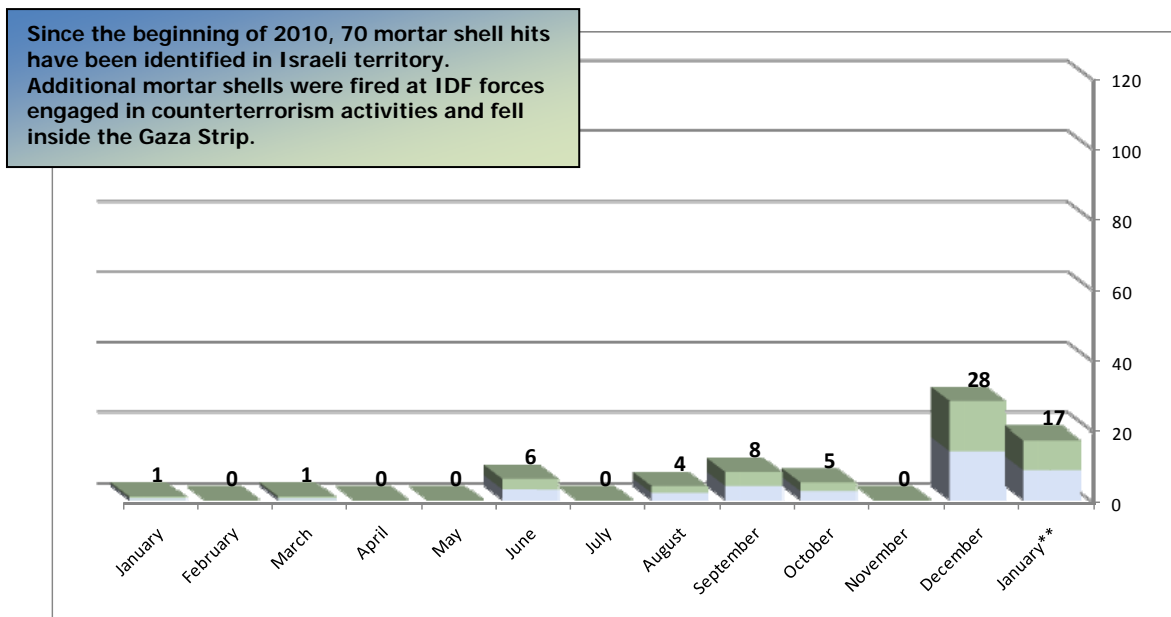


* Rocket hits identified in Israeli territory and not in the Gaza Strip.

** As of February 1, 2011.

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 -- Monthly Distribution



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

** As of February 1, 2011.

Israeli Navy Attacks

■ Following the Grad rocket attacks an Israeli navy boat attacked a post belonging to the Palestinian Islamic Jihad in Khan Yunis. No casualties were reported (Ynet, February 1, 2011).

Judea and Samaria

Counterterrorism Activities

■ This past week the Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities, detaining Palestinians suspected of terrorist activities (IDF Spokesman's website, February 1, 2011).

The Situation on the Ground

■ This past week demonstrations and riots were held at the usual friction points in Judea and Samaria, especially the villages of Bila'in and Ni'lin. The demonstrators, who included Palestinians, Israeli civilians and foreigners, threw stones at the security forces, who responded with riot control measures.

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Crossings

- This past week between 128 and 269 trucks carrying merchandise entered the Gaza Strip every day, including 160 tons of cooking gas. In addition, 11 tons of strawberries meant for export left the Gaza Strip through the crossings into Israel (Website of the Israeli government coordinator for the territories, February 1, 2011).
- **Following the demonstrations in Egypt, the Rafah crossing was closed.** Rioting was reported in the Sinai Peninsula, resulting in Egyptian border police abandoning their posts along the Gaza Strip border. Various Hamas operatives then took it upon themselves to secure the border (Hamas' Palestine-info website, January 20, 2011). The Israeli media reported that in an exceptional move, the Israeli government allowed Egypt to send 800 soldiers to the Sinai Peninsula, the first time since the two countries signed the 1979 peace treaty. The step was taken by Egypt to deal with rioting Bedouins (Haaretz, February 1, 2011).



Left: Operatives of the Hamas security forces at the closed Rafah crossing (Al-Arabiya TV, January 31, 2011). Right: An operative of the Hamas security forces near the Egyptian border (Hamas' Safa News Agency, January 30, 2011).

The Political Front

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. **Paraguay** declared its recognition of a Palestinian state with "the June 4, 1967" borders, joining Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Guyana and Uruguay, which recognized the "Palestinian state" in recent months. Palestinian Authority chairman Mahmoud Abbas claimed that the president of Peru promised him that at the summit meeting to be held in two weeks ten other states would recognize it

(Palestinian Authority TV, January 25, 2011). **Ireland** reported it would raise the level of the Palestinian delegation to embassy (Belfast Telegraph, Ynet and Al-Quds, January 26, 2011).

Reactions to the Demonstrations in Egypt

The Palestinian Authority and Hamas

■ The Palestinian Authority and Hamas are closely following the events in Egypt, but so far have kept a low media profile. Mahmoud Abbas held a telephone conversation with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and expressed the PA's worry for Egypt's security (Wafa News Agency, January 29; Al-Hayat, February 1, 2011).

Hamas Operatives Imprisoned in Egypt Escape and Return to the Gaza Strip

■ After the massive escapes from Egyptian prisons, the Arab and Palestinian media reported that several Hamas operatives who had been imprisoned in Egypt had escaped. Some of them, according to reports, had already reached the Gaza Strip and some were en route. One of them was Ayman Nofal, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades (Hamas's military wing) commander of the central sector of the Gaza Strip (Al-Risala, January 29, 2011).



One of the Hamas operatives who escaped from an Egyptian prison and returned to the Gaza Strip (left), with his father (Hamas' daily Felesteen, February 1, 2011).