



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

## **News of Terrorism and the Israeli- Palestinian Conflict**

**March 2-8, 2011**



"The Jewish claims on Jerusalem are based on fabrications" – Khaled Mashaal delivers a speech in Khartoum; present is the Sudanese president, Omar al-Bashir (PALDF, Hamas' main forum, March 6, 2011)

### **Overview**

- This past week two rocket hits were identified in Israeli territory, falling in open areas on March 5. There were no casualties and no damage was done. In response Israeli aircraft attacked three terrorist targets. An anti-tank missile fired at an IDF tank was intercepted by a new system called Wind Jacket.
- Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu plans to present a new solution for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict which includes an interim arrangement to be implemented immediately. Sources in the Palestinian Authority and Hamas have expressed opposition.
- The Palestinian Authority continues to seek international recognition for a Palestinian state. Britain upgraded the status of the PA delegation to embassy.
- The Iranian deputy foreign minister, on a visit to Lebanon, toured the southern part of the country, including the Israeli-Lebanese border.

# Important Terrorism Events

## Gaza Strip

### Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire

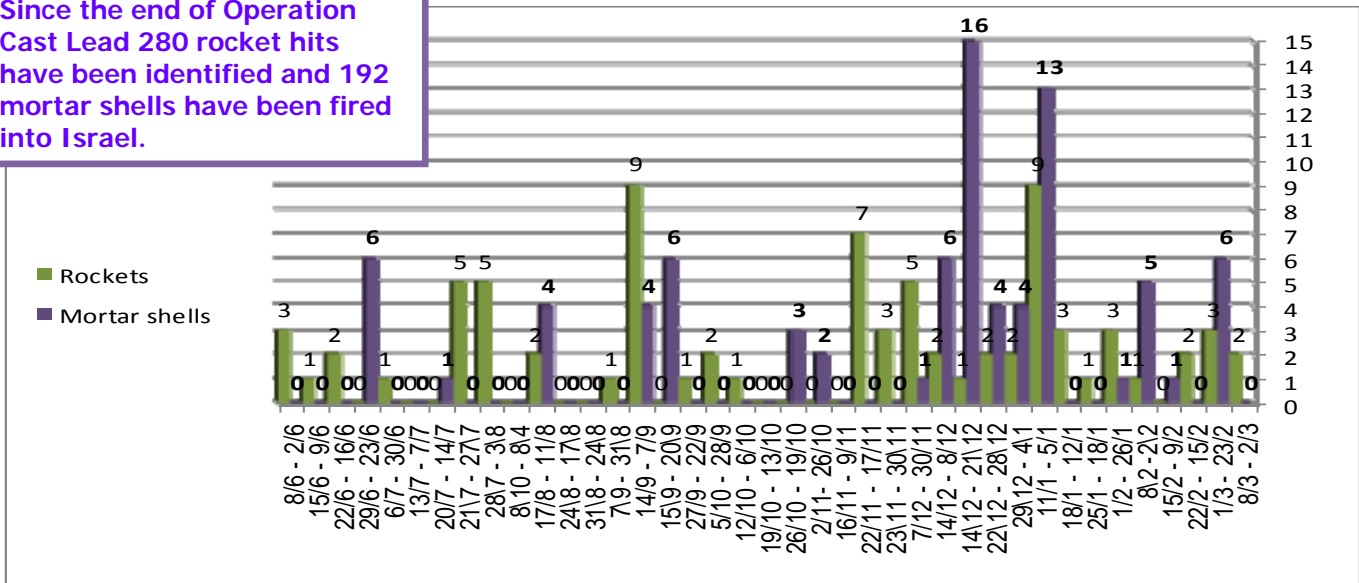
■ This past week **two rocket hits** were identified in Israeli territory. They fell in open areas in the western Negev on March 5. There were no casualties and no damage was done.

### Anti-Tank Missile Fired at IDF Tank

■ On March 1 an anti-tank missile was fired at an IDF tank engaged in routine activity near the border fence in the southern Gaza Strip. It was successfully intercepted by a new system called Wind Jacket, which destroyed it before it reached its target. Wind Jacket is a new, active defense system developed by Israel, which identifies, deters and prevents anti-tank missiles from reaching their targets.

### Rockets and mortar shells fired into Israeli territory<sup>1</sup>

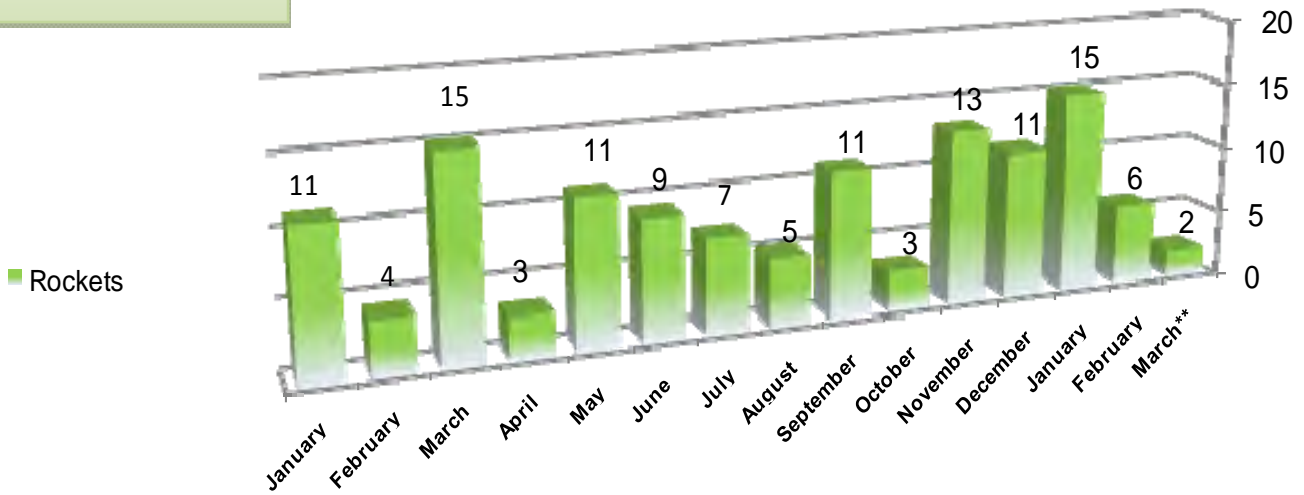
Since the end of Operation Cast Lead 280 rocket hits have been identified and 192 mortar shells have been fired into Israel.



<sup>1</sup> 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, 126 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory.

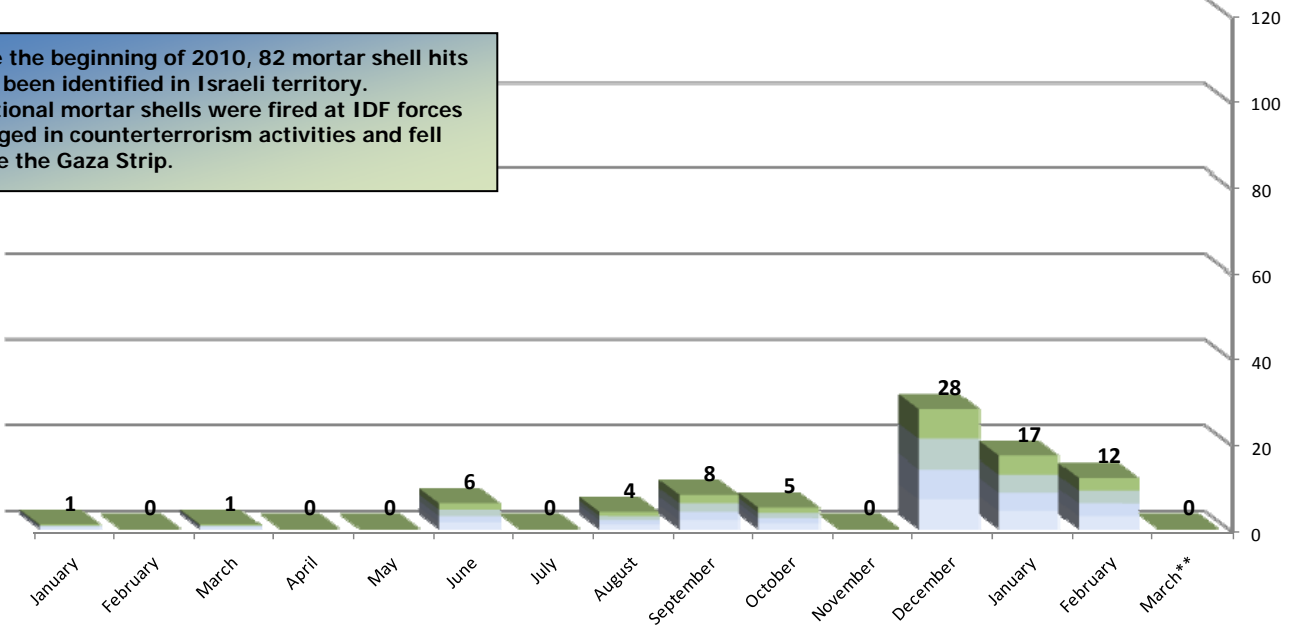


\* Rocket hits identified in Israeli territory and not in the Gaza Strip.

\*\* As of March 8, 2011.

### Mortar Shell Fire -- Monthly Distribution

Since the beginning of 2010, 82 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 March 8, 2011.

## Israeli Air Force attacks

- In response to the rocket attacks, on the night of March 5 Israeli aircraft struck three terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip. Among them were a tunnel built to infiltrate terrorist operatives into Israeli territory to carry out attacks (IDF Spokesman's website, March 6, 2011).
- According to media reports, among the targets struck were two posts belonging to Hamas' Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades in the western and southern areas of Gaza City (Agence France-Presse, March 5, 2011). There were no casualties (Safa News Agency and the PIJ Paltoday website, March 5, 2011).

## Hamas Continues Its Policy of Restrained Rocket Fire

- Hamas continues its policy of restrained rocket fire. The Al-Ahed revealed website an internal memo sent from the chief of the Hamas police force, Abu Obeida al-Jerah, to all the district police commanders and other police functionaries. In it he stressed that firing rockets at Israeli towns and villages was a "**serious offense**." He instructed his men to detain anyone attempting to fire rockets, take them for interrogation, and then turn them over to Hamas' internal security services (Al-Ahed, March 1, 2011).

## Jerusalem

### A Bomb Explodes in Jerusalem

- On March 6 a bomb exploded in a dumpster in the Israeli Jerusalem neighborhood of Gilo. Two passersby were wounded, one seriously, the other sustaining minor injuries (NRG, March 6, 2011).

## Judea and Samaria

### The Situation on the Ground

- The Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities in Judea and Samaria, detaining Palestinians suspected of terrorist activities.
- This past week demonstrations and riots were held at the usual friction points, especially in the villages of Bila'in and Ni'lin, and at other locations as well. As usual, the demonstrators were Palestinians, Israeli civilians and foreigners, who threw stones at the security forces, who responded with riot control measures.

## Developments in the Gaza Strip

### The Crossings

■ This past week between 164 and 263 trucks carrying merchandise entered the Gaza Strip every day. In addition, more than 800,000 flowers meant for export left the Gaza Strip through the crossings into Israel. For the first time, 2.5 tons of cherry tomatoes for export also passed through the crossings (Website of the Israeli government coordinator for the territories, March 1, 2011).

■ In view of the repeated terrorist attacks carried out at the Karni crossing, Israeli announced it would be closed and its activity moved to the Kerem Shalom crossing. The step, taken for security reasons, was protested in the Gaza Strip. The truckers on the Gaza Strip side announced they would go on strike beginning March 6 (Al-Ayam, March 3, 2011). As a result:

- Hamas spokesman **Fawzi Barhoum** blamed Israel, saying that closing the Karni crossing meant tightening the Israeli closure of the Gaza Strip.
- **Ziad al-Thatha**, minister of the economy, called for the intervention of the international community and expressed the support of the de facto Hamas administration for every activity protesting the closing of the crossing.
- **Ra'ed Fatuh**, chairman of the committee for importing goods into the Gaza Strip, said that the measures taken by Israel would raise the prices of transporting merchandise.
- **An UNRWA spokesman** also said he feared that moving the crossing would lead to an increase in the price of transporting merchandise and that the Kerem Shalom crossing would not supply the Gaza Strip's needs (Filastin al-'Aan, March 2, 2011).



Palestinians demonstrate against the closing of the Karni crossing  
(Hamas' Safa News Agency, March 7, 2011)

## The De Facto Hamas Administration Applauds the Position of the New Egyptian Foreign Minister

■ **Nabil al-Arabi**, the new Egyptian foreign minister, spoke to the media, among other things, for the first time about the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty. An article in the March 6 edition of Al-Shuruq hinted that under certain conditions Egypt would be able to revoke its peace treaty with Israel. On another occasion he claimed, according to the Palestinian media, that the peace between Israel and Egypt had harmed the Palestinian cause. He also said that Egypt's "blockade" of the Gaza Strip violated international law ( Hamas' Palestine-info website, March 7, 2011).



The new Egyptian foreign minister, Nabil al-Arabi (Al-Arabiya TV, March 6, 2011).

■ Hamas applauded Nabil al-Arabi's statements. Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** called his positions "honorable" and said he hoped they would be implemented in practice during the foreign minister's term ( Hamas' Palestine-info website, March 7, 2011).

### The De Facto Hamas Administration Takes Control of Money and Assets in the Gaza Strip

■ Police forces authorized by the minister of economy of the de facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip took control of the assets of the Gaza Strip branch of the Palestine Investment Fund (PIF).<sup>2</sup> According to the minister of economy, the fund is "the property of the people" and thus the government should run it. Hamas police also deployed to raid the Palestine Investment Bank to withdraw the Fund's assets. After the takeover a new board of trustees was appointed by the de facto Hamas administration (Al-Ayam, March 2, 2011).

■ Among the PIF's assets taken over by Hamas was the office building where UNRWA and other national organizations are housed. PIF spokesmen protested the takeover, saying that it was unlawful (PIF website, March 2, 2011).

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<sup>2</sup> The Palestinian Investment Fund (PIF) is an independent Palestinian investment company established to strengthen the local economy through investments. Initially it belonged to the Palestinian Authority and today is a corporation run by an independent board of trustees and directorship (PIF website, March 8, 2011). Its assets in the Gaza Strip are estimated between tens and hundreds of millions of dollars.



## The Political Arena

### The Palestinian Authority Refuses to Discuss an Interim Arrangement

- In recent weeks the Israeli media reported that Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu would deliver a speech presenting a new political plan to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Apparently, **it will be an interim arrangement which can be implemented immediately**. That is at variance with his former position of seeking a permanent arrangement which would include the core issues (Haaretz, February 26 and March 2, 2011).
- In view of the speech Prime Minister Netanyahu is expected to give, the International Quartet postponed the meeting which was supposed to take place in March (on an unknown date), apparently planning to wait until after the speech to hold it (Kuwaiti News Agency, March 2011).
- In response senior members of the Palestinian Authority said that the PA would not discuss an interim arrangement with Israel:
  - **Nabil Abu Rudeina**, presidential spokesman, said that the PA refused to reach a "temporary peace agreement" with Israel and that any solution which did not include complete Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem, was unacceptable (Kuwaiti News Agency, March 1, 2011).
  - **Yasser Abd Rabbo**, secretary of the PLO's executive committee, also said that the Palestinians refused to sign a temporary or partial peace agreement with Israel and that any agreement had to be backed by international guarantees and include a solution for all the core issues, such as the 1967 territory, Jerusalem and a solution for the refugee problem (Kuwaiti News Agency, March 2, 2011).

### Senior Hamas Figures Stress Rejection of an Arrangement with Israel

- Senior Hamas figures continue to express harsh criticism of the possibility of reaching a solution to the conflict through an arrangement with Israel. **Khaled Mashaal**, head of the Hamas political bureau in Damascus, speaking in Khartoum, said that the time had come "to turn a new leaf" without negotiations with Israel and without bargaining for the "rights" of the Palestinians. He said that not one inch of the soil of "Palestine" or the so-called "'right of return'" was to be given up. He added that the Jewish demands on Jerusalem were based on "fabrications" of its history which obscured the Islamic and Christian nature of the city (Hamas' Palestine-info website, March 6, 2011).
- **Khalil al-Haya**, a member of the Hamas political bureau, said at a speech given in the Gaza Strip that as long as the "Israeli occupation" existed, the Palestinians' relations with Israel would be characterized by "resistance" [i.e., violence and terrorism]. He claimed that Israel was

a "foreign body" in the Middle East and "transitory." He said that the territory of the State of Israel "from the [Mediterranean] sea to the [Jordan] river was Arab, Islamic land and that Israel had no right to it" (Hamas' Palestine-info website, March 3, 2011).

### Britain Upgrades the Status of the Palestinian Delegation

■ During the visit of Mahmoud Abbas, chairman of the Palestinian Authority, to Britain, **William Hague** said that Britain had decided to upgrade the status of the Palestinian delegation in Britain to embassy, and that the change would go into effect immediately (The Guardian, March 7, 2011).

■ As part of the Palestinians' diplomatic efforts to achieve international recognition of a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders, in recent months a number of European and other countries have upgraded Palestinian delegations to embassies, or announced their intention to do so.



Mahmoud Abbas meets former British Foreign Secretary Miliband during his visit to Britain (Wafa News Agency, March 8, 2011)

## Developments on the Northern Border

### Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Tours the Israeli-Lebanese Border

■ **Hussein Farhi**, Iranian deputy foreign minister on a visit to Lebanon, toured the Israeli-leg border. He visited the area of the **Shebaa Farms, Mt. Dov and the Fatma Gate**. He said he was proud to visit a place which had become "a symbol of the struggle of a heroic, strong people" and claimed that it proved the Lebanese people's support for Hezbollah (Israeli's Channel 10 TV, March 7, 2011).





The deputy Iranian foreign minister visits the border in the north (photo courtesy of Israel's Channel 10 TV, March 7, 2011).