Until further notice, updates on Operation Cast Lead and its implications will replace the weekly Wednesday bulletins.

The Israeli Air Force attacks in Gaza City (Al-Jazeera TV, December 28, 2008).

The Israeli Air Force attacks near the border security fence (Photo: Yehuda Peretz, courtesy of The Israel Project, December 27).

Rocket fired from within a densely populated area, Gaza City (Edi Israel for the Israeli Foreign Ministry, December 27).

Until further notice, updates on Operation Cast Lead and its implications will replace the weekly Wednesday bulletins.

1
Overview

1. At 11:30 on December 27 Israeli Air Force planes struck a number of targets of Hamas and the other Palestinian terrorist organizations in an operation dubbed “Cast Lead.” The attack came in response to a long period of rocket and mortar shell fire targeting populated areas in the western Negev, causing casualties and property damage, and seriously disrupting the daily lives of the residents. Hamas and the other organizations responded to the Israeli attack with rocket and mortar shell fire into Israel. The IAF strikes and the terrorist organization attacks continued into December 28 and 29.

Objectives

2. The objective of Operation Cast Lead is to protect the quarter of a million Israelis living in the western Negev from the continual rocket and mortar shell fire and other terrorist attacks carried out by Hamas and the other Palestinian terrorist organizations operating in the Gaza Strip. The operation intends to strike a severe blow to the terrorist networks of the various organizations and make it difficult for them to carry out rocket and mortar shells attacks, abductions and other types of lethal attacks originating in the Gaza Strip.

3. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said that the action was intended primarily to improve the security of the residents of southern Israel, although it was liable to take time and patience would be required to complete the mission (announcement by the prime minister to foreign and local correspondents, December 27). On December 27 Defense Minister Ehud Barak said that Israel would strike a strong blow against Hamas to make fundamental changes in the security situation and ensure that no more rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip and that no other attacks were carried out. He said it would not be easy and the operation would not be short, but as deep and broad as required (Haaretz, December 28).

Background

4. Since 2001 the residents of the western Negev have lived under the threat of rocket fire, which gradually became one of the central means of attack employed by the Palestinian terrorist organizations. Since 2001, 3984 rockets and 3,943 mortar shells have been launched at Israel, seriously disrupting the daily lives of hundreds of thousands of western Negev residents, and causing personal injury and property damage.

---

2 The data are updated to December 27 and afternoon hours of the first day of Operation Cast Lead. On the morning before the operation began, one rocket and two mortar shells were fired.

5. The Egyptian-brokered lull arrangement which went into effect on June 19, 2008, was supposed to bring quiet to the residents of the western Negev and the Gaza Strip. However, in reality, using a variety of excuses, from its inception the terrorist organizations violated the arrangement. During the six months of the lull, the terrorist organizations fired 223 rockets and 139 mortar shells, most of them during the six weeks between November 4 and December 19.4

6. In addition, Hamas and the other terrorist organizations exploited the lull to build up their military capabilities, including smuggling vast amounts of weapons into the Gaza Strip through tunnels dug under the border with Egypt (including rockets with a range long enough to reach the outskirts of the city of Beersheba). They ramped up their military training, prepared an extensive underground network of tunnels and developed weapons of their own (See the Appendix for a list of Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center Bulletins dealing, among other things, with the terrorist organizations' military buildup).

7. The lull arrangement, which was continually subjected to gross violations, finally expired on December 19, when Hamas and the other terrorist organizations formally announced it had ended. Once it was over, the terrorist organizations began attacking Israel with rocket and mortar shell fire. The attacks peaked on December 24, when at least 60 rockets and mortar shells were fired, most of them by Hamas, at the cities of Ashqelon, Netivot and Sderot, and at the populated areas close to the Gaza Strip. Hamas spokesmen also threatened to widen the range of the missile fire and to initiate suicide bombing attacks in an attempt to limit Israel's freedom of action and ability to respond, and to force it to open the Gaza Strip crossings even as rocket and mortar shell fire continued.

8. To realize its terrorist policy, Hamas repeatedly demonstrated it was ready to sacrifice the basic interests of the Gaza Strip Palestinians. That was manifested on December 24, when the Kerem Shalom and Erez crossings were shelled, the former vital for delivering supplies from Israel into the Gaza Strip and the latter for the passage into Israel of Palestinians with humanitarian needs. In recent years the crossings, which are lifelines for the Gazans, have been attacked, contributing to the difficulties in managing them and leading to the shortages and hardships in the Gaza Strip.

---

4 The Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center Bulletin “The Anatomy of Six Months of the Lull Arrangement” is available on the Hebrew website and will be shortly translated into English.
The Israeli Air Force Attack on the First Day of Operation Cast Lead

9. At around 11:30 on December 27, the Israeli Air Force attacked many targets of Hamas and the other terrorist organizations operating in the Gaza Strip. The targets had been marked by intelligence collected during the months preceding the attack. Fighter planes and attack helicopters carried out approximately 180 sorties, targeting Hamas headquarters, command posts, training camps and weapons stores. During the day launching squads on their way to fire rockets and mortar shells were also attacked, as were rocket launching sites (IDF Spokesman, December 27). According to the Palestinian media, on December 27, 250 Palestinians were killed and more than 750 injured. Information about some of the targets follows:

Headquarters and Bases

10. On December 27 headquarters, bases, training camps and weapons stores belonging to Hamas’s military-terrorist wing and its security services were attacked:

i) Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades and Executive Force headquarters in the northern Gaza Strip: Hamas commandeered the compound after it took control of the Gaza Strip in June 2007. It served to store weapons and equipment, as well as housing Russian BRDM armored patrol cars (confiscated from the Palestinian security services operating in the Gaza Strip before the Hamas takeover). Hamas used two of the vehicles in the attack on the Kerem Shalom crossing on April 19, 2008, during which seven IDF soldiers were wounded. The headquarters also served as Hamas’s main interrogation facility and a holding place for Fatah prisoners. In addition, it was a base from which terrorist attacks were dispatched (IDF Spokesman, December 27).
ii) Headquarters and weapons store of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades at Tel Zaatar, in the Jabaliya area: Hamas took control of the compound during internal confrontations, and used it for military training (IDF Spokesman, December 27).

iii) Hamas's Al-Islam post in the northern Gaza Strip: In the past it served the Palestinian Preventive Intelligence. Hamas commandeered the building when it took over the Gaza Strip, and it serves as a base for the Executive Force (which was integrated into the police). It also served as a post for senior members of Hamas shore patrol and a facility for detaining and interrogating Fatah activists and individuals suspected of collaborating with Israel (IDF Spokesman, December 27).

iv) Hamas's main headquarters compound in Gaza City: In the past it was Yasser Arafat's office in Gaza, and is currently Hamas's Gaza City headquarters. The office of Ismail Haniya, head of the Hamas administration, is located in the compound. The headquarters also served as a point for Executive Force patrols to gather before they went out into the city. In addition, there were police cars and armored patrol cars confiscated by Hamas when it took over the Gaza Strip.

v) Hamas post and training camp in the central Gaza Strip: The building was used to store weapons (IDF Spokesman, December 27).
vi) **Hamas training camp:** The camp also served as a central post for Hamas’s auxiliary force in the southern Gaza Strip, and included a prison facility and weapons store (IDF Spokesman, December 27).

![Image of Hamas training camp]

vii) **Headquarters and weapons store belonging to the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades and the Special Force:** In the past it was called the “Palestinian Prisoner Tower” at Tel al-Hawa, south of Gaza City, and was used as living quarters for Fatah prisoners who had been released. After Hamas took over the Gaza Strip it served as headquarters for its security services, housing a weapons store and offices. No ordinary civilians currently live there. During fighting snipers were positioned in the building and rocket launchers were located on the roof (IDF Spokesman’s website, December 27).

![Image of headquarters and weapons store]
Rocket Launching Sites and Squads

11. On December 27 a number of squads on their way to launch rockets were attacked. An underground rocket launching site located in a residential area was also hit.

Weapons Manufacturing Facilities

12. The Israeli Air Force attacked facilities used for the manufacture and storage of weapons, including lathes for producing rockets. The Palestinian media reported that a lathe belonging to the Barke family in Khan Yunis and two others, one in Gaza City and one in Rafah, were attacked on the night of December 27.

Communications

13. Hamas’s Al-Aqsa TV: Before dawn on December 28, Al-Aqsa TV station was attacked, Hamas’s main propaganda tool. According to reports in the Palestinian media, no one was injured and only the building suffered damage. Broadcasting stopped for a short time and was later resumed. The station’s CEO appeared in a broadcast to say that the station had moved to another location (Al-Aqsa TV, December 28). Al-Aqsa TV broadcasts propaganda and incitement against Israel and is often used by the terrorist organizations to claim responsibility for attacks against Israel.
14. According to the Palestinian media, on December 27 more than **250 Palestinians were killed in IAF air strikes and more than 750 were wounded**. Most of those killed belonged to Hamas, its internal security services and to other terrorist organizations. A number of senior figures were also killed:

i) **Tawfiq Jabber**, chief of the Hamas police in Gaza City. In the past a trusted colleague of Arafat, during the past two years he was often attacked by Fatah for making it possible to suppress Fatah activists in the Gaza Strip.

![Tawfiq Jabber (December 27, PALDF)](image1)

ii) **Ismail al-Ja’abari**, responsibility for Hamas's security and police defense services in Gaza. His role consisted mainly of providing protection for senior Hamas figures. He held the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and was appointed to his post by his brother, Ahmed al-Ja’abari, commander of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades in Gaza, in June 2007 (Hamas's PALDF Forum, Al-Zeituna and Al-Jazeera TV forum website, December 28).

![Ismail al-Ja’abari (Al-jazeera TV forum website, December 28)](image2)

iii) Ten Popular Resistance Committees operatives, among them **Muhammad al-Adgham**, commander of the artillery unit. On December 28 the PRC website reported that he died in the Sheikh Radwan neighborhood of Gaza City.

iv) Police officers’ course cadets.

v) **Ahmed ‘Ashur**, governor of the Central Gazan District.
15. Most of the casualties either wore Hamas uniforms and carried its weapons or worked for it. According to Palestinian media reports, a small number of civilian were also injured because Hamas headquarters and bases were located in populated areas. UNRWA’s commissioner general for the Palestinian Authority, Karen Abu Ziyad, announced the death of one of the organization’s employees, who was in a police station in Gaza at the time. She made it clear that the organization was no connection between UNRWA and Hamas. When asked by CNN on December 27 why the civilian population had been harmed, she said that many civilians had been killed because of the density of the population and the fact that civilian buildings were close to strategic targets.

Massive Rocket Fire into Israel

16. Hamas responded to the IDF attack with intensive rocket fire, most of it long-range, and mortar shells. On December 27, 61 rocket hits were identified in Israeli territory and 33 mortar shells were fired. Dozens of rockets hit the cities of Sderot, Ashqelon and Netivot, as well as villages near them. One Israeli civilian was killed, 11 were wounded and 11 went into shock:

i) Netivot: Bebert Vaknin, 58, was killed when his house suffered a direct rocket hit. Four civilians were wounded, two critically and two seriously.

ii) The village of Mivtahim in the southern Gaza strip: Two rockets hit the village of Mivtahim in the northern Gaza Strip, one of them directly striking the synagogue. One civilian was seriously injured, and an 80-year old man was slightly wounded.

17. Hamas claimed responsibility for most of the rocket fire and threatened to continue it.

The Gaza Strip Crossings into Israel and Egypt

18. Despite the massive attacks against Israel before and during Operation Cast Lead, the Israel government authorized the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip on the eve of the operation. On December 26, Defense Minister Ehud Barak authorized the passage of trucks carrying medical equipment, fuel and cooking gas, as well as a wide variety of other goods, through the Kerem Shalom, Nahal Oz and Karni crossings. A spokesman for the UN secretary general told a press conference that more than 100 trucks had passed through the crossings, including 40 for relief agencies operating in the Gaza Strip (website of the French Embassy in the United States, December 27).

5 As of 1600 hours, December 28, 12 rocket hits were identified in Israeli territory and 10 mortar shells were fired. This Bulletin does not include attacks carried out on December 28.
19. On December 28, the second day of Operation Cast Lead, additional trucks carrying humanitarian aid were permitted to enter the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom crossing. **On December 28, 23 trucks passed through** (IDF Spokesman, December 28).

20. Egypt, which had recently criticized Hamas, said it would open the Rafah crossing to allow wounded Palestinians from the Gaza Strip to receive medical treatment in Egypt, and that it would send ambulances, equipment and drugs to the Gaza Strip (Palestinian media, December 27).

**Public Disturbances in Judea and Samaria, and among Israeli Arabs**

21. Operation Cast Lead led to public disturbances in Judea and Samaria and in East Jerusalem to protest the IDF action in the Gaza Strip. Dozens of Palestinians demonstrated on Salah Al-Din street in East Jerusalem, setting fire to dumpsters and confronting police. In one incident a Palestinian tried to run over a policeman, who was not seriously injured; the attacker was detained. Near the village of Beitar Illit a child was injured when Palestinians threw stones.

22. Israeli Arabs also protested the IDF action in the Gaza Strip, marching in protest in a number of cities with mixed Jewish-Arab populations (Acre, Nazareth, Jaffa). In some instances stones were thrown at cars.

**First Reactions to Operation Cast Lead**

**Hamas**

23. **Khaled Mashal**, head of Hamas’s political bureau in Damascus, said that Hamas would not surrender or let Israel enforce a lull arrangement on Israeli terms. He said the Palestinians would not compromise on two basic demands: an immediate stop to the attacks in the Gaza Strip, and the lifting of the “siege” forever. He called on Egypt and Saudi Arabia to meet their commitments to the Palestinians. He claimed Hamas was not a threat to Egypt, and praised its efforts to open the crossings and deliver aid to the Gaza Strip (Al-Jazeera TV, December 28). (**Note**: as opposed to other Hamas spokesmen, who continue attacking Egypt).

24. **Khaled Mashal** also called on the residents of the West Bank to rise up against Israel in solidarity with the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, despite the fact that he was aware they were “exhausted.” He exhorted them to go out into the streets and ignite a military
intifada against Israel, waging a jihad and carrying out suicide bombing attacks (Al-Quds TV and Al-Jazeera TV, December 28).

25. Other senior Hamas figures said the following on December 27:

i) Ismail Haniya, head of Hamas administration, said that between 250 and 300 Palestinians had been killed in the Israel attack and more than 750 wounded. He said Hamas was determined to continue its path to victory or death for the sake of Allah, calling for the unity of the Palestinian people. He called on the Arab countries to do something to end the “siege” and open the Rafah crossing, and to stop their “crime” of collaborating with Israel (“the enemy”) (Al-Aqsa TV, December 27).

ii) Taher al-Nunu, Hamas administration spokesman, said that the IAF strikes had damaged all the headquarters of the security services. He claimed that Israel had attacked mosques and other places which had no relation to the “resistance” [i.e., the terrorist organizations]. He repeatedly stated that Hamas had no intention of renewing the lull arrangement or surrendering to the Israel attack (Al-Quds TV, December 27).

iii) Fawzi Barhoum, Hamas spokesman, claimed that Israel had received a green light for its attack from various elements around the world and the Middle East, including Egypt, mentioning the meeting of the Israeli foreign minister and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. He called on the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades (and the other military-terrorist wings) to launch rockets “wherever they could reach, and as many as possible,” at to carry out every sort of terrorist attack against Israel (Al-Aqsa TV, December 27).

iv) Musa Abu Marzuq, deputy head of Hamas’s political bureau, claimed that the real objective of the Israel attack was to end the Hamas rule in the Gaza Strip. He added that the “resistance” [the terrorist organizations] would carry out suicide bombing attacks and launch rockets, saying that the “resistance” in the West Bank was standing firm, as it was in the Gaza Strip (Al-Arabiya TV, December 27).

v) Talal Nasser, Hamas spokesman, called for suicide bombing attacks and rockets falling on Ashqelon, Beersheba and every other place (Al-Alam TV, December 27).

26. Although the IDF attack was precise, and those killed were mainly terrorist organization military and security operatives, Hamas, as usual, initiated a deceptive propaganda campaign intended to vilify Israel and represent it as attacking civilians. The attacks were described using the Arabic terms for “slaughter,” “holocaust” and “genocide.” The campaign was echoed by the popular TV station Al-Jazeera, which, as usual, acted as a mouthpiece for
Hamas, showing pictures of parts of dead bodies and the wounded, and using the term “holocaust.”

**The Palestinian Authority**

27. On December 27 Palestinian chairman Mahmoud Abbas was in Saudi Arabia, and on December 28 in Egypt. He met with the Saudi Arabian king Abdallah and with Egypt President Hosni Mubarak to discuss the Israeli attack on the Gaza Strip. Palestinian presidential spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeina criticized the Israeli “aggression” and demanded that the international community put an end to it (Wafa News Agency, December 27). Mahmoud Abbas called for stabilizing a new lull, saying that Egypt would renew its efforts to effect one (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, December 28). The Salam Fayyad government announced an emergency medical service situation and three official days of mourning.

28. The Palestinian media reported that there were strikes and protest demonstrations in cities in Judea and Samaria. In Ramallah there were a number of demonstrations, and at one of them, in the northern part of the city, demonstrators confronted IDF soldiers. In Nablus there were three protest marches attended by hundreds; in Bethlehem there was a demonstration attended by a few dozen people; in Tulkarm there was a widely-attended protest march; in Hebron there was a protest march of hundreds of people. Hatem Abd al-Qader, chairman of the Fatah Jerusalem committee, announced a general strike of all the Palestinian workers in Jerusalem.

**Lebanon**

29. Senior Hezbollah figures condemned the IDF attacks, claiming that it was the result of an American decision and an Arab “conspiracy.” Hezbollah spokesmen encouraged the Gazans to adhere to their positions and to refuse all concessions, and called on the Arab world, the UN and the Security Council to stop the “crimes” being carried out in the Gaza Strip. Omar al-Musawi, a member of Hezbollah’s political bureau, accused Egypt and the Palestinian Authority of colluding with Israel, and said they were responsible for the events in the Gaza Strip (Al-Jazeera TV, December 27).

30. In the southern (Shi’ite) suburb of Beirut there was a protest demonstration attended by hundreds of Lebanese in front of the Egyptian embassy. In the Ein al-Hilweh, Nahr al-Bared and Al-Badawi refugee camps Palestinians held protest demonstrations. At the demonstration at Ein al-Hilweh the demonstrators yelled “Hosni Mubarak, agent, traitor to the [Arab] nation.”
31. On December 25, two days before the Operation Cast Lead began, the **Lebanese army dismantled eight rockets**, with delay mechanisms, aimed at Israel. They were north of the town of Nakura in the western sector; their location was reported by a local resident. Four of the of them were 122mm Grad rockets, and four 107mm rockets.

![Image of rockets](image.jpg)

One of the rockets aimed at Israel, dismantled by the Lebanese army on December 25 (Reuters, December 25).

32. **So far it is unclear which terrorist organization tried to attack Israel** with rockets and violate the quiet in place along the Lebanese border since the end of second Lebanon war. The Hezbollah headquarters in south Lebanon said that the organization did not customarily place “anonymous rockets” and that “when [Hezbollah] wants to shell places in the enemy country it will make an announcement taking responsibility” (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, December 27). The Lebanese media suggested that **Fatah al-Islam**, a radical Sunni Islamist group affiliated with Al-Qaeda, was responsible (Al-Safir, December 27), or possibly a “well-organized” **Palestinian network** (Al-Hayat, December 27).

**Responses from the Arab-Muslim World**

**Egypt**

33. **Egyptian Foreign Minister Abu al-Ghait** attacked Hamas at a press conference broadcast by Egyptian television (December 27, 1300 hours). He said that Egypt had repeatedly warned Hamas about “the situation,” and that if [Hamas] did not listen it would have to bear responsibility, and could not blame others. He added that Israel had publicly warned Hamas that if the rocket fire continued, Israel would employ a military response. He angrily noted that before Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni came to Egypt on Thursday, 60 rockets had been fired into Israeli territory, an attempt to sabotage the Egyptian efforts to reach a lull and a reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah.

34. Other Egyptian spokesmen criticized the IDF action but some of them pointed the finger of guilt at the Palestinians. For example, a **presidential announcement** stated that Egypt
had warned against military escalation and the effect it would have on the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and the stability of the Middle East. The Israelis and Palestinians, according to the announcement, had not cooperated with Egyptian efforts, but nevertheless Egypt would continue pressing for a new lull arrangement (Middle East News Agency, December 27). Abu al-Ghait said that Egypt still called for all the organizations to come to Cairo to deliberate, and for the Palestinians to close ranks (Middle East News Agency, December 27).

35. The Egyptian media also reported on Egyptian activity through various diplomatic channels: Egypt protested the IDF action to Israeli foreign minister and the Egyptian foreign minister sent urgent messages to the UN Secretary General, the Quartet and the members of the Security Council to stop the IDF action. An “Egyptian source” said that Egypt had informed Hamas in the Gaza Strip that it was willing to accept Gazans wounded in the Israeli attack and would send convoys of medical aid to the Gaza Strip (Middle East News Agency, December 27). An Egyptian security source said that the Egyptian security forces had deployed additional men along the Gaza Strip border lest the Palestinians try to break through (Agence France Presse, December 26).

**Syria**

36. Syrian President Bashar Assad held telephone conversations with Arab leaders and called for an exceptional Arab summit to discuss the situation in the Gaza Strip and ways of stopping the “Israeli aggression” (Syrian News Agency, December 27). Syrian presidential aide Butheina Shaaban called the events in the Gaza Strip “slaughter and merciless murder.” She criticized the international silence and said that Hamas was the legitimate government and leadership of the Palestinian people (Al-Jazeera TV, December 27).

37. A protest march was held in Al-Yarmouk refugee camp near Damascus, attended by supporters of Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and other terrorist organizations. There were also protest marches in Aleppo and a mass march was expected to be held in Damascus on December 28.

38. During the days the preceded the Israeli attack the Syrian media supported Hamas’s decision to end the lull arrangement, as well as the escalation in rocket and mortar shell fire initiated by Hamas and the other terrorist organizations. Their support was part of a vicious
anti-Israeli propaganda campaign, accompanied by anti-Semitic references, waged by Syria against Israel.6

**Iran**

39. **Hassan Qashqawi**, a speaker for the Iranian foreign ministry, and other Iranian spokesmen, harshly criticized the Israel attack and demanded that the international community and the Security Council intervene to prevent Israel from continuing its “crimes” and “terrorism” in the Gaza Strip. In Tehran and Qom students held protest demonstrations (December 27 and 28).

40. There were also reports that an **Iranian aid ship** was supposed to leave the port of Bandar Abbas in Iran and set sail for the Gaza Strip on December 27 with a cargo of 2,000 tons of medical equipment and food. A team of Red Crescent workers and a number of correspondents are also on board. The trip is supposed to take two weeks (Al-Alam TV, December 25). The Iranian foreign minister Mottaki said that Iran had received authorization from Egypt to transfer the aid to Gaza (Islamic Republic News Agency, December 27).

**Jordan**

41. King Abdallah of Jordan appealed to the international community to exert pressure on Israel to stop its attack on the Gaza Strip immediately. He also contacted other Arab leaders to promote an Arab effort which would end the Israeli action and bring about a return to the negotiating table (Jordanian News Agency, December 27).

42. On December 27 a solidarity rally attended by thousands was held in Amman; it turned into a march. A number of Islamic Movement activists gave speeches criticizing the Arab world for its position vis-à-vis the events. The crowd shouted “Death to Israel.” Jordanian security forces prevented the march from reaching the Egyptian embassy. There were other rallies throughout Jordan in support of the Palestinian people.

---

6 Ghazi al-Dada wrote an anti-Semitic column for the Syrian newspaper Tishrin, saying that "the Israeli appetite for Palestinian blood is never satisfied...That is because [bloodthirstiness] is a basic component of Zionist ideology, which believes that Palestinian blood is necessary for making Zion matzot (a political use of the ancient blood libel against the Jews). Anyone who reads history closely knows that..." (Tishrin, December 23). The Syrian media occasionally inserts anti-Semitic motifs into its attacks on Israel.
Appendix

Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center Bulletins about Hamas, 2008


5. November 5: Escalation in the Gaza Strip: the IDF operated inside the Gaza Strip near the security fence to prevent the abduction of soldiers.


8. September 7: As part of the Gaza Strip military buildup, women are trained for combat and for suicide bombing attacks.


12. May 5: The Egyptian initiative for a lull in the fighting.


15. February 10: Renewed escalation of Hamas rocket fire at western Negev towns and villages (Summary of events, February 5-7).

16. February 3: Suicide bombing attack in the Dimona commercial center kills one city resident and wounds many.

17. January 29: With the border fence between the Gaza Strip and Egypt breached, Hamas and other terrorist organizations can freely smuggle operatives and weapons into the Gaza Strip and dispatch terrorists to Israel through Sinai.

18. January 23: Crowds of Gazans streamed into Egypt after the border fence was breached.

19. January 22: Closing the crossings into the Gaza Strip and renewing the fuel supply – the situation on the ground as of noon, January 22, 2008.

Operation Cast Lead—Update No. 2

Ground forces deploy in the vicinity of the Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, December 28)

Twenty-three trucks with humanitarian assistance cross into the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom Crossing (IDF Spokesman, December 28)

Direct hit at a construction site in Ashkelon, killing one person and severely and moderately wounding several others (Foreign Ministry, December 29, photo by Edi Israel)
**Terrorist targets attacked on December 28**

1. On December 28, Israeli Air Force attacked **more than 90 Hamas targets**, including military infrastructure, Hamas’s administration facilities, and terrorist operatives. Also attacked was the office of Hamas’s head of administration Ismail Haniyah. Of particular importance was the air raid on some 40 tunnels. **A total of more than 300 targets** have been attacked since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead.

**Tunnels on the Gaza-Egypt border**

2. In a four-minute air raid conducted in the southern Gaza Strip along the Philadelphi Road, Israeli Air Force fighters destroyed **about 40 Hamas tunnels** used for smuggling from Sinai to the Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, December 28). The tunnels were used to smuggle arms and ammunition for terrorist attacks against Israel. They were also used to smuggle terrorist operatives from Egypt into the Gaza Strip and vice versa.

![Tunnels attacked on the Philadelphi Road (IDF Spokesman, December 28)](image)

**Military and security infrastructure, Hamas’s administration facilities**

3. During December 28, the IDF continued attacking headquarters, bases, outposts, and other military, security and administration targets of Hamas. Examples of attacked institutions follow:

   a. **The Al-Saraya compound**, in Gaza City, housing Hamas administration offices and headquarters of its security services, was totally destroyed. The main prison of the Gaza Strip, where prisoners belonging to Fatah were held as well,\(^1\) was also located in that compound.

---

\(^1\) The Palestinian media offered conflicting reports about the presence of Fatah prisoners during the Air Force raids. According to some, the prisoners were evacuated before the attack, others claim that criminal prisoners were released but that Fatah prisoners remained inside during the attack. The Fatah movement issued an announcement with the names of its 20 killed activists. According to Fatah, on December 27 Hamas released the criminal prisoners, refusing to release the Fatah operatives. **Fatah spokesman Fahmi al-Za’yrir** accused Hamas of using Fatah
b. **An Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades training outpost**, in the Al-Maquisi towers in the northern Gaza Strip, was destroyed. Ten people were wounded.

c. **The Islamic University in Gaza**, the site of **Hamas's weapons research and development center**. The site was used to develop rockets with improved launching range (IDF Spokesman, December 29).

d. **An installation of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades** in Khan Younes.

e. **Lathes** (for manufacturing weapons) in the Gaza City neighborhood of Al-Zaitoun, in Khan Younes, and in the Al-Bureij refugee camp.

f. **A terrorist squad** in Khan Younes. According to Palestinian media reports, **Ahmed As’ad Fayad**, the chief of the artillery unit in the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, was killed in the attack.

g. **The house of a senior operative of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades**.

h. **A security outpost** in the western part of Gaza City.

i. **A Hamas police headquarters** in the former Israeli Kfar Darom region.

j. **The Al-Shajaiyya police headquarters** in Gaza City, which was completely destroyed.

k. **The sea police headquarters** in Gaza City and in Rafah.

l. **A National Security outpost** in east Gaza City.

m. **The National Defense headquarters** in Rafah.

n. **A vehicle with an Izz al-Din al-Qassam operative** in Jabaliya. The operative was killed.

---

prisoners as "human shields". Hamas hunted down and fired on Fatah prisoners who attempted to escape following the attack (Palestinian media, December 28).
4. During December 28, Israeli Air Force bombed Hamas’s Al-Aqsa TV building, which later resumed broadcasting from another site. According to reports on Palestinian media, various media institutions evacuated their offices from a building in Gaza City, including the Hamas Al-Quds channel, after receiving threats that it would be bombed.

5. According to Palestinian reports, so far more than 300 Palestinians were killed and over 1,000 were wounded, most of them terrorist operatives belonging to Hamas and other terrorist organizations. The presence of the terrorist organizations’ military infrastructure in the civilian areas of the Gaza Strip resulted in some civilian casualties in the attacks.

6. On December 28, rocket fire at Israel continued, albeit on a relatively smaller scale compared to the first day of Operation Cast Lead. A total of 14 rocket hits and 16 mortar hits were identified in December 28. For the first time, rockets landed in Gan Yavne and Bnei Darom (near the city of Ashdod), confirming Hamas’s threat to increase the range of fire (see details below). The hits caused minor injuries to five people and stress disorders to some others.

7. The extent of rocket fire increased on December 29, and many dozens of rockets were fired by noon. One of them hit a construction site in Ashkelon, killing a worker and causing severe and moderate injuries to several people. The rockets also directly hit a building in Sderot and a yard in another house in the city, causing light injuries and stress disorders to several people. Later that day, long-range rockets were fired at the cities of Ashdod and Ofakim, and the Yavne area.
8. A total of 75 rockets were identified in Israeli territory, and 49 mortar shells were fired on Israel since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead (not including December 29). As a result, two civilians were killed (one on December 29) and several dozens were injured, suffering mostly from stress disorders. Note: Summary of the rocket and mortar shell fire for December 29 will be included in the next update.

9. On December 28, two landings of artillery rockets were identified near the towns of Gan Yavne and Bnei Darom. The rockets were launched from the northern Gaza Strip and attained ranges of some 33-34 km. Examination showed that they were Chinese-made rockets with similar characteristics to standard 122-mm rockets. The maximum range of those rockets is up to 40 km.

10. The use of such rockets is a threat to additional hundreds of thousands of Israeli civilians and metropolitan areas, including Beersheba, Ashdod, and Kiryat Gat. Also, the rockets make it possible for Hamas to launch them from densely populated areas deep inside the Gaza Strip.

First ever launch of 122-mm artillery rockets on Gan Yavne and Bnei Darom

Remains of a rocket identified by Israeli Police

The body of the rocket after the hit

Writing on the rocket fin: E28 0210

A segment of the rocket
The crossings between the Gaza Strip, Israel, and Egypt

Transporting Israeli assistance

11. In the midst of Operation Cast Lead, on December 28 Israel approved the crossing of 23 trucks loaded with food, medications, medical supplies, and gas into the Gaza Strip. The trucks crossed through the Kerem Shalom Crossing. The aid shipment was designed to prevent a humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip and signal that the civilian population is not the target of IDF operations.

Difficulties with the transportation of Egyptian assistance through the Rafah Crossing

12. The Arab media reported that Egypt was willing to receive the casualties from the Gaza Strip, first claiming that they could not reach the Rafah Crossing due to Israel's air strikes. However, the Egyptian Foreign Minister announced that Hamas was not letting the casualties to arrive. At a press conference held by Abu Mazen in Egypt with the Egyptian Foreign Minister, Abu Mazen was asked why the casualties were not leaving the Gaza Strip. The Egyptian Foreign Minister answered the question and said that Egypt was waiting for the wounded. He insinuated that Hamas was to blame, saying: “They are not letting them through... ask the one in charge...” (Al-Arabiyya TV, December 28).

To watch the response of the Egyptian Foreign Minister, click here.

13. In the evening of December 28, after the Air Force attacked the tunnels, the Palestinians breached the border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt. Dozens of them started running towards Egypt. Hamas's Al-Aqsa TV reported that Egyptian security forces opened fire on them. Hamas started deploying its operatives in the Rafah region in order to prevent disorders and to keep militants from arriving on the scene. According to media reports, confrontations began between Hamas
operatives and the Egyptian security forces, in which an Egyptian officer and a Palestinian were killed. This prevented the evacuation of casualties to the Egyptian side (Al-Arabiyya TV, December 28). Following the incident, the crossing was closed down.

14. The Arab media reported that Egypt allocated two planes for supplying medical assistance (that would arrive in Sinai and, once there, be transported to the Gaza Strip). Those planes are also meant to transport the injured to hospitals in Egypt. It was also reported that a Qatari aid plane arrived at the Al-Arish airport, as well as aid collected in various regions in Egypt and Britain. However, so far, the aid has not started coming into the Gaza Strip through the Rafah Crossing.

**Protests and order violations in Judea and Samaria**

15. A general strike was declared in Judea and Samaria in protest of the developments in the Gaza Strip. Stores and official Palestinian Authority institutions were closed down. Universities, colleges and schools announced a one day strike to express solidarity with the Gaza Strip (Pal-Media, December 28). Also, many protest rallies were held and local conflicts took place, which did not get out of hand, with the Israeli security forces in several places in Judea and Samaria.

16. Following are details of the incidents in Judea and Samaria and among East Jerusalem Arabs:

a. **The Ramallah region:** a group referring to itself as the National Palestinian Initiative held on December 28 a demonstration on Al-Manara square in the city of Ramallah, attended by hundreds of Palestinians who raised Palestinian flags and signs condemning the international silence over the developments in the Gaza Strip (Maan News Agency, December 28). Violent confrontations took place between dozens of protestors and IDF forces near the roadblock of Qalandia. Also, confrontations took place between demonstrators and IDF forces in a number of villages in the Ramallah region in which a Palestinian was killed and several others were injured (Al-Quds TV, Al-Arabiyya TV, December 28).
b. **Hebron**: many confrontations took place between Palestinians and the Israeli security forces. The demonstrators threw rocks and Molotov cocktails at IDF forces and blocked roads with burning tires (Wafa News Agency, December 28). A total of 20 Palestinians were injured as the demonstrations were dispersed.

c. **Qalqilya**: confrontations took place between IDF forces and Palestinians (Al-Aqsa TV, December 28). Also, confrontations took place in the village of Azur, near Qalqilya (Al-Quds, December 28).

d. **Bethlehem**: two Palestinians were injured in confrontations between IDF forces and Palestinians (Al-Aqsa TV, December 28). In the village of Husan, west of Bethlehem, on December 28 in the evening there occurred confrontations between IDF forces and demonstrators on the road leading to the Israeli village of Beitar Illit. An Israeli woman was injured and several cars were damaged (Nidaa al-Quds website, December 28).

e. **Nablus**: a mass procession was held in Nablus on December 28. The participants raised signs of condemnation and the stores were closed down. The governor of the Nablus district, Jamal al-Muhaysen, called upon the participants to work towards national unity (Wafa News Agency, December 28).

17. **The Jerusalem region**: dozens of Israeli Arabs, residents of East Jerusalem, took part in solidarity rallies with Gaza organized by civil institutions in Jerusalem on the night of December 28 at the Damascus Gate (Wafa News Agency, December 28). Two civilians from the town of Biddu north west of Jerusalem were injured during confrontations between young people and IDF forces at the entrance of the town (Wafa Agency, December 28). At the Shoefat refugee camp, north of Jerusalem, residents threw rocks at Israeli security forces (Maan News Agency, December 28).
Reactions on the Palestinian scene

Hamas

18. Spokesmen for Hamas and Palestinian terrorist organizations continue to condemn the activity of Israel, accusing it of “massacre” and “holocaust” against the Palestinians and promising a “proper response”. They also criticize the silence of the world countries, particularly Arab countries. Thus, for example, Fawzi Barhoum, the Hamas spokesman, called a press conference in the Gaza Strip in which he said that it was Israel that chose to start the war. However, Israel will not be the one to choose when the war will end. Barhoum referred to the happenings in the Gaza Strip as a “massacre” and “holocaust”, and called upon the Arab and Muslim world to intervene (Al-Aqsa TV, December 28).

19. Against the backdrop of the developments in Gaza, Hamas is waging a propaganda campaign in order to turn Israeli and world public opinion to what is happening in Gaza. In that context, the Hamas Al-Aqsa television station broadcasts images from the attacks in Gaza coupled with songs of incitement. Also, the station broadcasts short clips with messages in broken Hebrew which address the Israeli public. In the two clips there is a picture of a skull with warlike music playing throughout. In one of the clips the speaker says that Israel is faced with two options, either peace that will return the “rights of the Palestinians” or war that will “crush you”.

The Palestinian Authority

20. Abu Mazen, Chairman of the Palestinian Authority, pointed during a press conference held with the Egyptian Foreign Minister in Egypt the blame at Hamas, which, as he believes, is responsible for the escalation in the Gaza Strip. According to him, before the Israeli attack he tried to form direct and indirect contact with Hamas leaders in the Gaza Strip and asked them not to put an end to the lull in the fighting.
Reactions from the Arab and Muslim world

**Egypt**

21. Egyptian spokesmen continue to condemn the Israeli operation but at the same time to attack Hamas. In this context, the Egyptian Foreign Minister **Ahmed Aboul Gheit** implied that Hamas was the one that prevented the transportation of the Palestinian casualties in order to receive medical treatment in Egypt (Al-Arabiyya, December 28). Ahmed Aboul Gheit stressed again and again that Egypt's goal in the coming period was to exert international pressure on Israel to stop the activities against the Palestinian people. According to him, all the crossings between Israel and the Gaza Strip should be opened so that the Palestinian people can receive its needs (Middle Eastern News Agency, December 29).

22. The commentator of Radio Sawt al-Arab **Mahmoud al-Agami** strongly condemned both Israel and Hamas. He said that Israel was perpetrating a “war crime against the Palestinian civilians”. At the same time, the commentator also claimed that the Hamas leadership bore the responsibility for the “acts of destruction and killing against the Palestinian people”. According to him, Hamas made a mistake by not replying to Egypt’s invitation to come to the internal Palestinian dialogue and did not heed Egypt’s call to continue the lull in the fighting arrangement, and prevented supply convoys from arriving in the Gaza Strip (Sawt al-Arab, December 28).

**Iran**

23. During the last day, Iran broadened its propaganda and diplomatic activity against **Israel and Egypt** and at the same time began preparations for sending humanitarian assistance designed for Gaza Strip residents. In various cities in Iran demonstrations continued, in which the demonstrators carried slogans saying “death to Israel”.

24. In this context:
   a. **Iran’s President Ahmadinejad** noted that “...The Zionists built their own trap and no hand can actually save them. Those measures [of the Zionists] drop them faster into the trap and shorten their lives...” (ISNA, December 28). Ahmadinejad held a telephone conversation with Ramadan Abdallah Shalah, the leader of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), and after it he declared that the attack in Gaza worsened the situation of the “Zionist regime” (IRNA, December 28).
   b. **Iranian Foreign Minister Mottaki** and other Iranian senior figures strongly condemned Israel’s attacks, calling them a “new terrorist measure” and “the greatest
crime of the century”. The Iranian Foreign Ministry condemned “the violation of basic human rights” perpetrated by Israel (ISNA, Al-Alam TV, December 28).

c. **The student organizations** which support the Palestinians held a press conference in the Hamas chamber in Tehran. Hamid Hosseini, a member of the central committee of an organization calling itself the Movement of Justice Seeking Students, addressed the Egyptian people and called upon them to take measures against their leaders, mainly “to revolutionally execute the Pharaoh of Egypt, that is **Husni Mubarak**” (Fars News Agency, December 28).

25. On December 28, the Iranians started loading fuel, drugs, and food on a ship with assistance to the Palestinians that is docking at the port of Bandar Abbas. Also on board are 12 physicians and Iranian social workers. A spokesman for the Iranian Red Crescent announced that the ship would arrive at the port of Aqaba (AFP, December 28). In addition, a spokesman for the Iranian Red Crescent informed that two Iranian planes with food and drugs would be sent to the Egyptian Red Crescent (AFP, December 28).

![The Iranian assistance ship docking in the port of Bandar Abbas (Al-Alam, December 25)](image)

### Lebanon and Hezbollah

26. In protest of the developments in the Gaza Strip, many demonstrations and protest rallies were held across Lebanon, initiated by the Palestinian terrorist organizations, local religious leadership, and Islamic officials. In front of the Egyptian embassy in Beirut there was held a demonstration initiated by Hamas and the PIJ. During the demonstration, the demonstrators tried to break into the embassy building and were stopped by the Lebanese security forces. The Lebanese Prime Minister met with representatives of the Palestinian organizations in order to discuss ways to help the Gaza Strip.
27. The Lebanese President met with the Defense Minister and discussed the increase of security measures in the country. The Lebanese army and the Lebanese security forces raised the alert level fearing that the developments in the Gaza Strip would cause tensions in Lebanon (Al-Hayat, December 28). UNIFIL forces increased their patrols in south Lebanon (Al-Nahar, December 28).

28. Hezbollah senior figures continued to condemn the IDF’s activity in the Gaza Strip, calling upon the Arab world to act in order to open the crossings. Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah gave a speech on December 28 in the southern suburb of Beirut, dedicated mostly to severe attacks on Arab countries, mainly Egypt, calling upon the Egyptian people to rise against the government (echoing the Iranian attack on the Egyptian government). The key points of the speech (Al-Manar, December 28):

a. The Gaza Strip is the site of an Israel-American plan which strives to impose, through war and pressure, a humiliating agreement on the Palestinian people and then on Lebanon and Syria (following up on the peace treaties signed with Egypt and Jordan).

b. There is an “Arab partnership” to that plot. The war of 2006 (the second Lebanon war) took place with Arab consent. Those Arab regimes which demanded the second Lebanon war be waged now strive to eliminate Hamas, the PIJ, and the other organizations. The peoples in the Arab and Islamic countries which share that plan must put pressure on their governments “even if they open fire at us”. Nasrallah noted that those who die as a result of the fire opened on them will be considered a shahid (martyr) of Islam.

c. The Egyptian government is responsible for what is taking place in the Gaza Strip nowadays. The Egyptian government is not required to fight Israel, but only to open the Rafah Crossing, so that food, drugs, water, and weapons can be transferred to members of the “resistance” (terrorist organizations operating in the Gaza Strip).
That was what Nasrallah claims Syria did in the second Lebanon war, even though its border crossings with Lebanon were constantly bombed.

d. **Hassan Nasrallah called upon millions of Egyptians to take to the streets**, otherwise they will be partners to the crime of the Egyptian government. He asked: “Can the Egyptian police kill millions of Egyptians?” and replied: “No, it can’t”. He called upon the Egyptian people to open the Rafah Crossing by turning their chests (to the fire of the Egyptian security forces).

29. In response to Nasrallah’s incitement against the Egyptian regime, the Egyptian Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit attacked Nasrallah, saying that his purpose was to create chaos in Egypt just like the chaos which prevails in Lebanon. According to him, the situation in the region is dangerous and Egypt condemns Israel’s military operation. He also added that Egypt had a special responsibility on the Palestinian issue and towards the Gaza Strip (AFP, December 29).

**Syria**

30. Held in Damascus was a solidarity rally with the Gaza Strip attended by tens of thousands of people. The demonstrators raised flags of Syria, Palestine, Hamas, Hezbollah, and the pictures of Bashar Assad. The Syrian television widely covered “the aggression on the Gaza Strip” and Israel’s “terrorist history”, broadcasting the images of bodies of Palestinians and children with blood on their faces. A commentator for Radio Damascus (December 27) also condemned Arab leaders for their silence over the so-called Israeli siege of the Gaza Strip, which, according to him, green-lighted the Israeli operation.
31. On February 28, solidarity demonstrations with the Palestinians continued in Jordan's cities. The opposition parties issued a call to hold a demonstration in front of the Egyptian embassy in the afternoon of December 28. At a demonstration in the city of Ma'an, the demonstrators called to cancel the peace treaty with Israel, condemned the Egyptian president, and raised images of Saddam Hussein. The Jordanian media called to immediately expel the Israeli ambassador, claiming that Jordan's relations with Israel have always been a burden on Jordan.

Solidarity rally with the Gaza Strip in Amman (Al-Jazeera, December 28)
Operation Cast Lead—Update No. 3

On December 29, Israel allowed the crossing of more than 60 trucks and 10 ambulances to the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom Crossing (IDF Spokesman, December 29)

Injured man being evacuated from a construction site in Ashkelon that suffered a direct rocket hit. One person was killed and several others were severely and moderately injured (Foreign Ministry, December 29, photo by Edi Israel)

Direct hit at a house in Sderot (Sderot Media Center, December 30, photo by Hamutal Ben Shitrit)

Israeli Air Force raid in Gaza City (Palestine-info, December 29)
Overview

1. On December 29, the third day of Operation Cast Lead, Israeli Air Force raids continued on targets of Hamas and other terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip. The targets of the attacks included military installations, Hamas's administration symbols, terrorist operatives, and arms and ammunition. The number of people killed in the attacks, in our assessment, exceeds 350, the great majority of them terrorist operatives.

2. On December 29, the extent of Hamas's rocket fire and mortar shelling became greater, the organization having clearly recovered from the initial shock of the Israeli air raid. A total of 57 rocket landings and 15 mortar shell hits were identified on the third day of the fighting. Of particular note were 122-mm long range rocket landings in the city of Ashdod (for the first time) and in other distant population centers that have not been targeted before (Ofakim and the Yavne region, as well as such cities as Sderot, Ashkelon, and Netivot). On December 30, a rocket even landed in the heart of Beersheba, the capital of the Negev. Evidently, despite the damage it took, Hamas still has the ability and willingness to launch a constant stream of rockets and mortar shells on Israel, including improved 122-mm Grad rockets.

3. With that in mind, it appears that Operation Cast Lead may continue and even expand in order to achieve the target set forth by the Israeli leadership, namely, a significant, long-lasting improvement in the security situation of western Negev cities and towns.

Attacks on terrorist targets on December 29

Overview

4. On December 29, the third day of Operation Cast Lead, the Israeli Air Force attacked dozens of facilities belonging to Hamas and other terrorist organizations. The targets attacked included headquarters and military installations, training camps, rocket launch sites, and buildings used by the Hamas administration throughout the Gaza Strip. During the night, the Israeli Navy joined the activity by attacking several terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip, including outposts, training camps, and positions of the Hamas naval force. Since the beginning of the operation, the Air Force made about 400 sorties, hitting over 390 targets of Hamas and the other terrorist organizations.

5. As at the morning of December 29, more than 350 Palestinians were killed and over 1500 were injured during Operation Cast Lead. The vast majority of the casualties are terrorist operatives who were staying in headquarters, bases, and installations used by
Hamas and the other terrorist organizations. Some of the casualties are civilians accidentally killed inside or in the vicinity of terrorist targets.¹

6. According to the IDF Spokesman, the targets attacked included: some 30 rocket and mortar shell launch sites, a truck loaded with long-range Grad rockets, launch squads, a rocket launcher, five weapon production sites and weapon silos, about ten Hamas buildings and outposts, about five groups of terrorist operatives, and a terrorist center operating in a mosque in the northern Gaza Strip. Also hit were senior terrorist operatives, including a senior PIJ commander, Ziad Abu Tir, and one of the leaders of the Hamas rocket unit, Ayman Siam.

**Attack on a truck loaded with Grad rockets**

7. The Air Force attacked a Hamas truck loaded with dozens of Grad rockets in the Jabalia region (northern Gaza Strip). The truck was hit and the rockets exploded. It appears that Hamas wanted to transport the rockets from a building in which they were stored to a safe location, fearing that their present location would come under attack by the IDF, or in order to bring them closer to launch sites where they could be fired on Israeli population centers (IDF Spokesman website, December 29).

---

¹Al-Arabiyya TV reported that according to UNRWA information (as at December 29), 51 civilians were killed since the beginning of the operation (meaning that the rest of the victims are not civilians but rather terrorist operatives). Hamas, which controls the media in the Gaza Strip, conceals or plays down the extensive damage caused to the military terrorist infrastructure and to terrorist operatives.
What follows is a summary of the information that appeared on Palestinian media about military, security, and administration targets of Hamas and the other terrorist organizations attacked during the third day of Operation Cast Lead:

a. **A Hamas administration office compound in the neighborhood of Tel al-Hawa**, western Gaza City. Three seven-story buildings were bombed in the attack, killing 10 and injuring about 40.

b. **The Hamas Prisoners Office headquarters.** An Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative named Nasser Hamouda was killed in the attack.

c. **The seat of the Hamas Interior Ministry**, which formerly served as the preventive security headquarters.

d. **The Naval Police headquarters** in Nusseirat.

e. **Tunnels** in the Rafah region.

f. **The Information Office of the Salah al-Din Brigades**, the terrorist-operate wing of the Popular Resistance Committees, near the legislative council building in Gaza City.

g. **A lathe** used for weapons production in the central Gaza Strip.

h. **The air defense service headquarters** in the southern Gaza City.

i. **The air defense headquarters** in western Khan Younes.


---

*A poster produced by the Jerusalem Battalions, the terrorist wing of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, commemorating the death of the organization's operatives, the most senior of which (on the right) is Ziad Abu Tir (Jerusalem Battalions website, December 30).*
m. The house of a senior operative of the Hamas military wing, Maher Zaqout. Seven people were killed and 30 were injured in the attack.

n. The house of an operative of the Hamas military wing, Nour Barake, in Bani Suheila, east of Khan Younes.

o. The house of a senior operative of the Hamas military wing, Ayman Siam. Two people were killed and about 35 were injured in the attack.

p. The Al-Qarara police building in Gaza City.

q. The Foreign Ministry building of the Hamas administration in the Gaza government compound.

r. A Hamas security installation in Jabalia.

s. The security compound headquarters in the central Gaza Strip.

t. The Ummah University for Military Studies in western Gaza City, which belongs to the Hamas administration’s Interior Ministry.

u. An Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades training camp in the central Gaza Strip.

v. An Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades outpost in Al-Nusseirat.

w. Buildings belonging to the Islamic University.

x. The naval police headquarters in Gaza City.

y. The police station in the central Gaza Strip.

**Hamas’s response: intensive rocket fire on Israel**

After two days of initial shock, Hamas finally recovered. On December 29, the third day of the operation, massive rocket and mortar shell attacks were launched, including long-range rockets which hit Ashkelon and, for the first time, downtown Ashdod, the Yavne region, and the city of Ofakim.

A total of 57 rockets and 15 mortar shells landed during December 29. What follows is a summary of the major hits:

a. A rocket hit a construction site in Ashkelon in the morning, killing Hani al-Mahdi, a construction worker from the Israeli Bedouin village of Aroer. The rocket also injured 11 civilians, one of them severely, two moderately, and the rest lightly. Other rockets which landed in the city of Ashkelon caused stress-related injuries.
b. Around 21:00, a long-range rocket landed (for the first time) in downtown Ashdod, killing Irit Shitrit, who sought shelter at a bus station which was then hit by the rocket. Eight other civilians were injured, one of them severely (Irit Shitrit’s sister), two lightly, and the rest suffered stress-related injuries.

c. At 21:45, two mortar shells landed in the brigade headquarters near Nachal Oz, killing First Staff Sgt. Lutfi Nasraldin, 38, from the Israeli Druze village of Daliyat al-Karmel. Five soldiers were injured, one severely and four lightly.
11. **On the backdrop of the massive fire, Ashraf Zaid**, the head of the Hamas public relations committee, said in an interview to Hamas’s Sawt al-Quds radio (December 29) that Hamas “**digested the blow and contained it**”. He added that Hamas still had a lot of rockets to give to the Palestinian people. “… The rockets pierce the Arab silence… and strike at the heart of the entity [Israel] in Ashkelon, Ashdod, and the Negev. The enemy must expect a constant stream of Qassam surprises…”

12. Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead, a total of **132 rockets** landed in Israeli territory and **64 mortar shells** were fired on Israel. As a result, **four civilians were killed and 31 were injured.**² Also, the fire caused dozens of stress-related injuries.

---

² On December 30, more rockets were fired, including one which landed in a Beersheba kindergarten in the evening.
The crossings between the Gaza Strip, Israel, and Egypt

Transporting humanitarian aid from Israel

13. On December 29, Israel allowed the crossing of more than 60 trucks with humanitarian assistance for Gaza Strip residents. Additional trucks are scheduled to cross on December 30. Also, Palestinians with urgent humanitarian problems continue to cross through the Erez Crossing.

14. After the Palestinians breached the Egyptian border, Egypt sent reinforcements to the border area to prevent similar incidents from happening again (Al-Arabiyya TV, December 29). Also, Egypt apprehended more than 150 Palestinians who came to Egypt illegally when the border fence was breached on December 28 (Al-Youm al-Sabe’ news portal, December 29). The detainees were deported back to the Gaza Strip on December 29. On December 29, confrontations continued between Palestinians and Egyptian security forces along the Gaza Strip border. The Palestinians fired in all directions, threw Molotov cocktails, and set fires along the border fence. Five Egyptian police officers were injured in the confrontations (AFP, December 29).

15. On December 29 in the afternoon, the Rafah Crossing was opened and Egypt allowed the passage of several dozen trucks with aid for the Gaza Strip. The aid came from Egypt, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Libya. Also, dozens of injured people started to be evacuated from the Gaza Strip to receive medical treatment in Egypt (Arab media, December 29).
16. On December 29, an aid plane of the **Iranian** Red Crescent landed in Egypt. It was reported that another plane was on its way (ISNA, December 29). The Iranian aid ship Iran-Shahed left the Bandar Abbas port on December 29 en route to Jordan’s port of Aqaba (Mehr News Agency, December 29). Iran announced that two more ships would embark soon (ISNA, December 29).

17. On December 29, **Syria** said that an aid convoy with food and medical supplies was on its way to the Gaza Strip (Syrian News Agency, December 29). **Jordan** also said that a convoy with food and medical supplies was on its way. A senior Jordanian official stated that Jordan intended to send aid convoys on a weekly basis (Jordanian News Agency, December 29).

**The ship Dignity prevented from arriving**

18. On the night of December 29-30, the ship called **Dignity** left Cyprus once again on its way to the Gaza Strip. Approaching the Gaza Strip, it was asked to identify itself by Israeli Navy vessels. It did not respond and made a sharp turn, colliding into the Israeli ship and slightly damaging both. After the collision, the ship responded and started turning back towards Cyprus. Israeli Navy vessels escorted the ship on its way back to Cyprus, offering their assistance in case of malfunctions (IDF Spokesman, December 30).
Protests and violations of public order in Judea and Samaria

19. Anti-Israeli protests continue in Judea and Samaria. Several demonstrations were held in Hebron; the demonstrators confronted the Palestinian Authority security services as well as the Israeli security forces. Several demonstrators were lightly injured. In the village of Husan, near Bethlehem, demonstrators confronted IDF forces. Other demonstrations took place in Jericho and near the Damascus Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem. Salam Fayad’s government announced that it would not prevent protest rallies, but that it would not let them near “clash sites” with IDF to prevent any more Palestinian casualties (Wafa News Agency, December 29).

Stabbing attacks against Israelis

Israel

20. Kiryat Sefer: a Palestinian doing construction work at a house in the village of Kiryat Sefer, near Modi'in, went on a stabbing spree on the morning of December 29. First he stabbed the contractor, who was severely injured; then he stabbed the couple who owned the house, following which he stabbed two passers-by on the street. The terrorist was shot dead by a medical volunteer who happened on the scene.

Judea and Samaria

21. Kedumim: a Palestinian who arrived in the Samaria village of Kedumim stabbed one of the residents in his neck, lightly injured him, and fled from the scene. The IDF began searching for the terrorist. Fatah’s Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades claimed responsibility for the stabbing (Ma’an News Agency, December 29).
A selection of reactions

**Hamas**

22. Top Hamas’s Gaza leaders, such as Mahmoud al-Zahar, Sa’id Siam, and Khalil al-Hayya, have been keeping “media silence” since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead, fearing that they might be hit by the IDF. Connection with the media is maintained mostly by Hamas spokesmen: Fawzi Barhoum, Mushir al-Masri, and Sami Abu Zuhri. Reactions to the operation from the Hamas leadership in Damascus, members of the Political Bureau, are also constantly heard.

23. Following are several messages by Hamas spokesmen in the past two days:

a. **Hamas can protect itself against an Israeli ground assault.** Entering the Gaza Strip is going to be a “dangerous adventure” for the IDF, and it will result in the deaths of many (Palestinian) civilians (Mushir al-Masri, Monte Carlo Radio, December 29).

b. **Hamas’s conditions for a renewed lull in the fighting:** Khaled Mash’al, the head of the Political Bureau, responded to an appeal by the President of Senegal, saying that Hamas never objected to the lull in the fighting but that it had clear demands and conditions. It demanded the cessation of Israel’s “aggression” in the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank, the opening of the crossings between Israel and the Gaza Strip, and the opening of the Rafah Crossing (Muhammad Nazzal, member of the Hamas Political Bureau, in an interview to the Russian Arabic-language TV station RT, December 29). Hamas expressed its willingness to renew the lull in the fighting, but it will not do it for free but rather according to conditions which everybody is aware of (Muhammad Nazzal, Al-Arabiyya TV, December 29).

c. **Severe lashing out against Abu Mazen:** Abu Mazen, “the godfather of the Palestinian issue”, “is dancing on the wounds of Gaza Strip residents”. His invitation to a dialogue with Hamas is unacceptable, because “Abu Mazen is no longer Palestinian, he is not a patriot, and has nothing to do with the resistance anymore...” (Fawzi Barhoum, Al-Aqṣa TV, December 29).
Syria: anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic rhetoric

24. The Syrian propaganda continued the attacks on Israel, intertwined with anti-Semitic expressions. Israel’s attacks in the Gaza Strip were described as a holocaust, pogrom, massacre, and a war of mass destruction (Tishreen, December 29). Also, the Syrian propaganda attacked Egypt and Saudi Arabia, without mentioning them explicitly, accusing them of abetting the “Israeli crime” and promising that history and the peoples would not forgive their governments.

25. As in the past, the Syrian propaganda integrated anti-Semitic expressions in the anti-Israeli campaign. Thus, for example, an article in the newspaper Al-Thawra noted that “the despicable racism is drawn from the guidelines of the Talmud and the principles of the Zionist movement...” (Al-Thawra, article by Hassan Hassan, December 29). Israel is depicted as “a Zionist-Nazi gang”, “the new Nazism”, “a racist entity”. The Jews are depicted as “the same Jews throughout history... warmongers and terrorism producers, they are the world’s most bloodthirsty and racist people” (ibid).
A poster with the photographs of several operatives belonging to Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas’s military-terrorist wing, killed in Operation Cast Lead. The poster was co-published with the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas, and the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades. The text on the bottom of the poster reads: “[They] are those who ascended to Heaven, Allah willing, in the massacre against the Gaza Strip in December 2008” (mypal, a Palestinian online forum, December 31). Hamas’s propaganda campaign attempts to play down the fact that most of those killed in the operation are terrorist operatives.
Overview

1. On December 30, the fourth day of Operation Cast Lead, over 50 additional terrorist sites were attacked by the Israeli Air Force and Navy. Targets included rocket launch squads, houses of terrorist operatives, weapons' manufacturing sites, administration facilities, and Hamas's symbols of power. According to Palestinian reports, more than 390 people have been killed and over 1700 have been wounded so far. Most of those killed are operatives belonging to Hamas and the other terrorist organizations.

2. The rocket fire continued on the fourth day of the operation, and while slightly fewer rockets were fired than on the previous day, they targeted Israeli cities within the range of 40 km from the Gaza Strip. One of the rockets (122-mm Grad) hit a kindergarten (which was empty at the time) in Beersheba, making it the first time that city suffered a rocket hit. Rockets also landed in the cities of Ashdod, Kiryat Malachi, Rahat, Ashkelon, Sderot, and in the dining hall of Kibbutz Miflasim.

3. Four days into the operation, initiatives to end it started to appear. According to the Al-Hayat newspaper, the Egyptians presented the Turks with a work paper pertaining to a ceasefire and a possible lull in the fighting. According to Israeli media, the Israeli cabinet was supposed to discuss an initiative for a 48-hour “humanitarian truce”. However, since the attacks continued and increased in range, and given Hamas’s belligerent responses on the media, it appears that Operation Cast Lead is still far from over.¹

Attacks on terrorist targets on December 30

Overview

4. On December 30, the IDF (the Air Force and the Navy) attacked over 50 additional targets in the Gaza Strip. According to the IDF Spokesman’s announcement, the targets included: ready to launch Grad launchers, weapons manufacturing sites, Hamas outposts, launchers, launch squads, armed operatives, and launch areas. Also attacked were administration facilities and Hamas's symbols of power. The significant number of

¹ According to a report in ynet (December 31), Prime Minister Olmert said after a security cabinet meeting that Israel "did not get into the operation only to end it when it is still under attack, as was the case before it started".
secondary explosions in most of the attacks is testimony to the large quantities of weapons stored in the attacked sites. In total, since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead the Air Force carried out about 470 sorties, attacking about 450 targets of Hamas and the other terrorist organizations.

**Attacks on military and security infrastructure and administration facilities of Hamas and the other terrorist organizations**

5. Following is a summary of the attacks’ results, based on announcements made by the IDF Spokesman and on information from the Palestinian media:

a. **Ismail Haniyah’s office in the Hamas administration compound in Gaza City:** on the night of December 30-31, the Air Force attacked the office of the Hamas administration chief Ismail Haniyah. It was an administration target which was used for planning, supporting, and funding terrorist activities against Israel. Also attacked were the Hamas administration offices found in the same area (IDF Spokesman, December 31). Over the past several days, the IDF attacked several buildings in the Hamas administration compound in the Gaza City neighborhood of Tel al-Hawa, which served as the Hamas administration’s treasury, foreign affairs, and labor and housing ministries, rendering them completely inoperable (IDF Spokesman, December 31).

b. **Tunnels:** on December 30, the Air Force attacked dozens more tunnels along the Philadelphi Road in the southern Gaza Strip. The tunnels were used, among other things, for smuggling arms and ammunition and transferring terrorists to and from the Gaza Strip.
c. **Launch squads:** shortly after the launch of the Grad rocket at Beersheba, in the evening of December 30, Air Force planes detected the launch squad and the fixed launchers from which the rockets were launched in the northern Gaza Strip. The squad was attacked, with the Air Force pilots reporting a direct hit.

d. **Motor boats** of the Hamas naval force.

e. **Rocket and mortar launch sites:** on December 29, the IDF fired warning shots at open territory in the northern Gaza Strip to prevent the arrival of launch squads to those areas.

6. According to Palestinian media, the houses of many senior operatives of the military-terrorist wings of Hamas and the other terrorist organizations were attacked:

a. The house of Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades senior operative Muhammad Ouda in the northern Gaza Strip.

b. The house of Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades senior operative Abd al-Karim al-Sha’er in Rafah.

c. The house of Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades senior operative Adnan Riyah in Rafah.

d. The house of senior Hamas operative Ahmed Daloul in Gaza City, near the Islamic Center.

e. The house of Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades senior operative Youssef al-Najma in Gaza City.

f. The house of the police chief in the Al-Shati refugee camp, Alaa Alyan, near the house of the Hamas administration chief Ismail Haniyah.

g. A police station and building belonging to the Al-Salah charitable society on the ruins of the former Israeli town of Morag.

h. Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades outposts in Beit Lahiya and Beit Hanoun.
Palestinian casualties

13. According to Palestinian reports, **more than 390 Palestinians were killed and over 1700 were injured so far. Most of those killed were Hamas operatives and operatives from other terrorist organizations** (see Appendix for details). According to ynet (December 31), the head of Israel Security Agency Yuval Diskin said during a security cabinet meeting that some Hamas operatives were hiding in hospitals and walking around in doctors’ and nurses’ uniform. He added that dozens of mosques turned into command and control posts based on the assumption that Israel would not attack those places.

Hamas’s response: intensive rocket fire on Israel

14. The fourth day of the operation saw the continuation of the rocket fire and mortar shelling on Israel, also marking the first time that a **rocket landed in Beersheba**. Rockets were also fired on Ashdod, Ashkelon, Netivot, Sderot, and other towns near the Gaza Strip. The main events were the following:

a. **Beersheba**: at about 21:00, a rocket landed in a kindergarten in a neighborhood in the city of Beersheba, damaging the kindergarten. Because it was late, no children were present. One passer-by was lightly injured and several other civilians suffered shock.

b. **Kiryat Malachi**: a rocket landed near the city, causing no casualties or damage.

c. **Rahat**: a rocket landed near the town, causing no casualties or damage.

d. **Ashkelon**: two rockets landed in the center of the city. As a result, 2 people were lightly injured and about 10 suffered shock.

e. **Ashdod**: at around 18:00, a rocket landed in a parking lot of a factory in the city.

f. **Sderot**: at around 11:30, several rockets landed in the city of Sderot. Two of them directly hit two houses in the city. Two civilians were lightly injured and several others suffered shock.

g. **Village of Mefalsim**: a rocket landed in the dining room of the village.
15. **Hamas** claimed responsibility for most of the firing incidents, including a **rocket which landed in a kindergarten in Beersheba**. Other organizations also claimed responsibility, including the PIJ, the Popular Resistance Committees, the Democratic Front, and Fatah’s military wing.

16. Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead, a total of **147 rockets** landed in Israeli territory and **70 mortar shells** were fired on Israel. As a result, **4 civilians were killed and over 40 were wounded**.\(^2\) Also, the attacks caused many dozens of stress-related traumas.

### Rocket and mortar shell landings during Operation Cast Lead

\(^2\) As at the morning of December 31. Dozens more rockets were fired during December 31 (as at the afternoon).
Humanitarian assistance from Israel

17. On December 30, Israel allowed more than 90 trucks to pass through the Kerem Shalom Crossing.

Transporting Arab assistance and injured people through the Rafah Crossing

18. In the past day, humanitarian aid from Arab countries continued to come into the Gaza Strip through the Rafah Crossing:

a. Libya: 7 trucks of medical supplies and 7 power generators entered the Gaza Strip (Wafa Agency, December 30).

b. Saudi Arabia: Saudi aid flown in on planes is scheduled to arrive in the Gaza Strip during December 31 (Middle East News Agency, December 30).

c. Algeria: 61 tons of food and medical supplies were brought by planes, some of which landed in Al-Arish, Sinai. Some of them are scheduled to land in the coming days. The aid is scheduled to arrive in the Gaza Strip in the coming days (Wafa Agency, December 30).

d. Jordan decided to send humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip on a daily basis, including food, medical supplies, and blood rations (Jordanian News Agency, December 30).

19. On December 30, the US donated 85 million dollars to UNRWA, 25 million of which are meant for the emergency needs of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank, and the rest to the organization’s main treasury.

20. During December 30, some 50 injured people were transported from the Gaza Strip to hospitals in Egypt, through the Rafah Crossing. Al-Jazeera TV reported (December 30) that the transportation was stopped in the afternoon due to concerns over Israeli attacks along the border with Egypt (referring to the attacks on the tunnels carried out in the afternoon along the Philadelphi Road). In the evening, after the IDF finished attacking the tunnels on the Philadelphi Road, the Rafah Crossing was reopened (AFP, December 30).
Protests and violations of public order in Judea and Samaria

21. Public order violations by Palestinians protesting the operation in the Gaza Strip continued in Judea and Samaria. In the Qalandia refugee camp, south of Ramallah, confrontations occurred between Palestinians and IDF forces. During the confrontations, the rioters threw Molotov cocktails at the security forces. Two Palestinians were injured. Other clashes took place south of Hebron. During rallies held in Jerusalem's Old City, the demonstrators clashed with the security forces. Rallies were also held in Jenin, Tulkarm, Ramallah, and Jericho.

22. In addition, there were several attempts to perpetrate terrorist attacks, such as throwing explosive charges and Molotov cocktails, stabbing attempts, and throwing rocks. The main events follow:

a. **Throwing an explosive charge**: a pipe charge was thrown during the night on an Israeli vehicle near Adora, southwest of Hebron. There were no casualties, but the vehicle was damaged.

b. **Throwing stones**: an Israeli baby was slightly injured when the car his family was driving in was hit by stones south of Hebron. A border police patrol which identified the stone throwers fired rubber bullets on their lower body and reported that one of them was hit.

c. **Stabbing attempt**: a Palestinian arrived at the Hawara checkpoint near Nablus and attempted to stab a soldier. He was detained by the soldiers and handed over to the security forces.

23. Senior Palestinian Authority figures told an Al-Hayat reporter that the Palestinian security services had been instructed to “prevent the public appearance of gunmen and prevent demonstrators in the cities from coming to the Israeli military roadblocks, fearing that the security anarchy would resume”. The decision also included a ban on incitement against the Palestinian Authority (Al-Hayat, December 30).
The political and propaganda sphere

Preliminary mediation attempts

Egyptian-Turkish mediation attempt?

24. According to the *Al-Hayat* newspaper (December 30), the Egyptian Foreign Minister presented the Turks with a “work paper” containing four paragraphs on the cessation of Israel’s operations in Gaza. The work paper includes a ceasefire, resumption of the lull in the fighting, opening the crossings, and providing regional and international guarantees that the crossings remain open and the agreement is implemented. A senior Turkish Foreign Ministry official said that Turkey was in general agreement with the Egyptian proposal. That senior official also added that Turkey intended to hold talks with Hamas and Syria about the Egyptian work paper.

French initiative for a “humanitarian truce”

25. The Israeli national security cabinet convened Wednesday morning to discuss the developments in Operation Cast Lead. The cabinet is also supposed to discuss a French initiative for a 48-hour “humanitarian truce”, which is a cause for controversy among Israel’s political and defense leadership (Ynet, Haaretz, December 31). According to another report, the conclusion at the end of the meeting was that the IDF would continue the military operation (Ynet, December 31).

Reactions to Operation Cast Lead

Hamas

Hamas’s propaganda and its key messages

26. Following the initial shock, Hamas’s media and its public relations division started going back to normal, with the external leadership in Damascus filling the void left by the Hamas leadership in the Gaza Strip, which avoids public appearances for fear of being attacked. The Al-Aqsa TV station, which was attacked by the IDF, continues broadcasting, although there has been a decrease in the number of its news editions and live broadcasts. It has been replaced by the *Al-Quds* satellite channel, which spearheads the Hamas public relations campaign on the international scene. The Hamas publications *Felesteen* and *Al-Risala* have not been published in the last few days.
27. Following are the main public relations messages heard from Hamas spokesmen over the course of the last few days, addressed both to the Palestinians and to the international audience (including the Israeli public opinion):

a. Hamas has regained its senses and taken back the initiative after the initial blow that it took: The military, security, and administrative situation in the Gaza Strip is under the control of Ismail Haniyah's administration, and Israel was unable to change the “equation” in the Gaza Strip. Hamas forces and the other terrorist organizations (the “resistance”) have managed to contain the initial blow and they are now aiming their rockets at Israeli population centers (Mushir al-Masri, Palestine-info, December 29). Ismail Haniyah's administration continues to provide services to Gaza Strip residents despite the Israeli attacks (Palestine-info, December 30).

b. Emphasis on the claim that Israel targets civilian institutions, playing down the damage caused to military infrastructure: Israel has hit universities, mosques, charitable societies, and civilians’ houses (Ismail Radwan, Palestine-info, December 30). A similar message was also relayed to the Israeli public opinion (Mushir al-Masri in an interview to Israeli daily Haaretz, December 30). In that interview, Mushir al-Masri noted that the Israeli claims that the Hamas military force took a severe blow were not true, and that Hamas’s military abilities were not damaged (ibid).

c. Threats to step up the fire on Israeli residents and to launch suicide bombings: The residents of Sderot, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Yavne, and more distant areas will have no safety until the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip get safety and stability. “Jihad will have the upper hand” (Mushir al-Masri, Sawt al-Aqsa Radio, December 30). The Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades managed to hit Ashdod, Ofakim, Kiryat Gat, and Yavne. “We forced the Zionists into their bomb shelters, where they’re hiding in holes...” The rocket attacks will reach farther places and additional cities (Abu Obeida, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades spokesman, Sawt al-Aqsa Radio, December 30). Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum called upon the various organizations to carry out suicide operations and “move the campaign deep into Israel’s home front” (Palestine-info, December 30).

d. Refusal to negotiate with the Palestinian Authority and continuing besmirching it: Abu Mazen’s call for a dialogue with Hamas came too late, Fatah and Abu Mazen’s aides are collecting intelligence information on Hamas bases and operatives and are transferring it to the “Zionist enemy”, Salam Fayad, “the illegitimate
Prime Minister” in Ramallah, avoids releasing the “jihad warriors” held in Palestinian Authority prisons due to the Americans’ refusal (Fawzi Barhoum, Al-Aqsa TV, December 30).

e. **Hamas’s position regarding a renewed lull in the fighting**: there can be no discussion on a lull in the fighting until Israel stops its attacks in the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank and opens all the crossings (Moussa Abu Marzouq, Al-Alam, December 30). That was one of the few references made by Hamas spokesmen to the renewal of the lull in the fighting and the cessation of hostilities.

**Other reactions**

**Egypt**

**President Mubarak’s speech**

28. The following are some of the topics brought up in President Mubarak’s speech (Egyptian satellite TV, December 30):

   a. **Call to Israel to immediately and unconditionally cease its attacks in the Gaza Strip**, whatever reasons it may have for continuing them.

   b. **Call for unity among the Palestinians**, mentioning that Egypt warned (implying Hamas) that a refusal to the lull in the fighting would “prompt Israel to aggression against Gaza”.

   c. **Condemnation of those who “trade Palestinian blood”** (hinting at Iran and Syria), and a pledge that Egypt would not allow them to make political achievements at the expense of the Palestinian people.

   d. **Mention of the efforts put in by Egypt** to stabilize the lull in the fighting and provide humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip (food, medicaments, electricity).

   e. **Egypt supports the resumption of the lull in the fighting** after Israeli attacks cease, while reopening the crossings.

29. President Mubarak extensively addressed the issue of the Rafah crossing, making it clear that Egypt would not give in to the pressure exerted by Hamas. He noted that Egypt rejected Israel’s “scheme” to separate the West Bank from the Gaza Strip, evade its responsibility
towards the Gaza Strip, and lay it on Egypt. He said that Egypt would not help deepen the internal Palestinian division by opening the Rafah Crossing without the cooperation of the Palestinian Authority and EU observers, in such a way that would contradict the agreement achieved in 2005. He added that Egypt would continue to allow the opening of the Rafah Crossing to transport humanitarian aid.

**Mass demonstrations in Egypt**

30. In December 28, mass demonstrations were held in various sites throughout Egypt, protesting the Israeli operation in the Gaza Strip. The demonstrations continued on December 29 and 30, even though on a much lesser scale. The demonstrations were led by the Muslim Brotherhood, and were conducted in a relatively peaceful manner, without any severe clashes with the Egyptian security forces.

31. The demonstrators expressed their support of Gaza Strip residents, condemned Israel’s “massacres”, and condemned the government’s stance on the happenings in the Gaza Strip. In some cases, the demonstrators demanded to expel the Israeli ambassador to Egypt, to close down the Israeli embassy, and to stop the export of gas to Israel. After the first day of the demonstrations, there started to appear some criticism against the attacks on Egypt, the damage to its reputation and to its status (as happened during a demonstration held in the University of Cairo, for example). At the same time, the Egyptian Foreign Minister and the Egyptian media (December 30, 31) strongly condemned the speech given by Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, in which he incited the Egyptian people to rise up against the government.

**Syria**

32. Demonstrations against the IDF operation in the Gaza Strip continued in the cities of Syria (Aleppo, Homs). The demonstrators condemned the silence of the Arab countries and the international community, burned the Israeli flag, and called upon Arab countries to sever their ties with Israel.

33. The anti-Israeli media campaign was also accompanied by anti-Semitic statements, which is often the case with Syrian propaganda. Of particular note was Muhammad Habash, a Syrian Parliament member, who justified the Holocaust of the Jewish people in an interview to the Iranian TV channel Al-Alam (December 30). In the interview, he noted that he had read a very important document saying that Hitler wrote in his personal diary that he could have killed all Jews, but that he chose to let some of them live so that the whole
world know why he perpetrated a holocaust against them (Al-Alam TV, an Iranian Arabic-language television channel, December 29).

Inter-Arab: the incitement campaign of Al-Jazeera TV service of Hamas’s propaganda

34. Qatar’s popular Al-Jazeera TV channel is fully recruited to Hamas’s propaganda campaign, as is the channel’s custom (and just like they put themselves at the service of Hezbollah in the second Lebanon war). That channel is received by the Palestinians, by Israeli Arabs, and by the entire Arab-Muslim world.

35. The channel broadcasts live from the Gaza Strip, showing, for example, long close-up shots of bodies and body parts, as well as children ostensibly killed by Israel (supporting Hamas’s propaganda campaign which brings up the false claim that most of the fatalities are civilians, playing down the significant number of killed terrorist operatives). The channel often uses such terms as “the Gaza holocaust” (mahraqat ghaza) and “massacre” when referring to the IDF attacks.

36. The channel frequently interviews such terrorist leaders as Khaled Mash’al (Hamas), Ramadan Shalah (PIJ), and Hassan Nasrallah (Hezbollah), giving them plenty of screen time (while pragmatic Arab leaders and Hamas’s opponents are hardly heard from). Also, the channel puts on the air members of radical Islamic movements from across the globe and frequently broadcasts interviews with clerics who preach violence and hatred against Israel and the Jews. While the channel does air brief interviews with Israeli speakers, it does so disproportionately compared to other speakers.

3 For example, on the night of December 30 the channel broadcasted live from a support rally with the Gaza Strip held by the Salafi movement of Kuwait (a radical Islamic movement which seeks a return to the early days of Islam). The broadcast featured speakers who encouraged terrorism and violence against Israel. Calls against the Jews were heard at the rally, using early Islamic terminology. One of the speakers repeated: “Kill them [the Israelis and the Jews] wherever they are.”
Appendix

Terrorist organizations’ casualties in Operation Cast Lead

1. The Palestinian media report that over 390 people were killed and over 1,700 were wounded (as at the morning of December 31). Most of the casualties are terrorist operatives belonging to Hamas and the other terrorist organizations, which is reflected in the list of fatalities on Hamas’s website.

2. Following are some examples of terrorist operatives killed in the attacks, taken from Palestinian websites:

   a. In the poster which appears on the front page of the present Information Bulletin, there are photographs of 17 Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operatives killed in the attacks.

   b. On December 27, the Popular Resistance Committees announced that ten operatives were killed, including Muhammad al-Adgham, the organization’s artillery officer (PRC website, December 27, 2008).

   c. Photographs of terrorist operatives which appear on the PALDF forum on the Hamas website.

Examples of photographs of terrorist operatives killed in the IDF attacks

Abu Khaled al-Zahra, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative (PALDF, December 31, 2008)

Abu al-Salem Abu Abda, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades Operative, killed on December 27 (PALDF, December 31, 2008)

Muhammad Talal al-Sabil, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative killed in the attacks (PALDF, December 31)
Muhammad al-Tabasha, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative (PALDF, December 31, 2008)

Tamer Asafa, operative commander, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades (PALDF, December 31, 2008)

Abd al-Karim Wahaba, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative (PALDF, December 31, 2008)

Wisam Ayyash, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative, the son of Ismail Haniyah’s sister (PALDF, December 28, 2008)

Sahib Muhammad Asafa, special unit operative, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades (the brother of Tamer Asafa) (PALDF, December 28, 2008)

Alaa Ibrahim al-Qatrawi, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative, standing near an Al-Batar anti-tank launcher (PALDF, December 30, 2008)

Amin al-Zurbatli, Izz al-Din al-Qassam (PALDF, December 29, 2008)

Alaa Ibrahim al-Qatrawi, Izz al-Din al-Qassam operative, standing near Qassam rocket launchers (PALDF, December 30, 2008)
Hamas terrorist operative who served in the Palestinian police killed in the IDF attacks

The Palestinian police in Gaza is a manpower resource pool for military operatives of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades. Killed in the Israeli Air Force attacks were Hamas police officers and members of the interior security who serve in its military infrastructure. One example follows:

Muhammad Yahya Muhanna in a Hamas police officer’s uniform (PALDF, December 30, 2008)

Muhammad Yahya Muhanna, a commander in the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades (PALDF, December 30, 2008)
January 1, 2009

Operation Cast Lead - Update No. 5

Direct hit on a kindergarten in Beersheba, December 30
(Photo by Herzl Yosef, Ynet, December 30)

Bearings scattered from a Grad rocket that hit a Beersheba school
(Yaron Brenner, Ynet, December 31)

Direct hit on a Beersheba school
(Foreign Ministry, December 31)
1. On December 31, the fifth day of Operation Cast Lead, the air force attacked more than 50 targets in the Gaza Strip. The targets attacked included rocket launcher squads, armed operatives, and a mosque that served for weapons storage and from the vicinity of which rockets were fired at Israel (secondary explosions in the mosque were evidence of the large amount of ammunition stored there). Since the start of the military operation, the air force has attacked **over 500 targets** belonging to Hamas and the other terrorist organizations.

2. At the same time, on December 31, rocket and mortar shell fire continued at a similar scale to that of the previous day. The rockets landed in Beersheba, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Netivot, Sderot and other communities. **In Beersheba**, at the outer range of the rockets, five rockets landed. One of them was a direct hit on a school (where classes were not being held at the time). A total of **312** rockets and mortars have landed during the operation (as of December 31).

3. Israel, in cooperation with international aid organizations, is continuing to make every effort to enable humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip. Over the last day, 93 trucks carrying food and medicine passed into the Gaza Strip from Israel through the Keren Shalom Crossing. A large amount of humanitarian aid also reaches the Gaza Strip from the Arab and Muslim world via the Rafah Crossing. According to reports coming from the Gaza Strip itself, there is a sufficient stock of food and drugs there, and there is no humanitarian crisis.

4. Five days after the start of the operation, it appears that it is still far from over. The IDF is prepared to **expand and intensify** its activity in the Gaza Strip, including a ground operation against Hamas, when the order is given to do so by the political echelon. To date Israel has not accepted the ideas and proposals that have been raised for a unilateral ceasefire, as they hold no assurance that Hamas will cease the rocket fire and that Operation Cast Lead will achieve its goal of substantially changing the security situation in southern Israel.
Assaults on Terrorist Targets, December 31

Overview

5. On December 31, **the air force attacked over 50 targets in the Gaza Strip**. The targets of the attacks, according to IDF Spokesman announcements, included arms production sites, Hamas outposts, rocket launchers, launch squads, armed operatives, and launch sites. Also attacked were government buildings and symbols of Hamas' administration. Among other targets was a **mosque** that served for arms storage. **In this case, as in other cases, the many secondary explosions testified** to a large quantity of ammunition stored in the site attacked. **In all**, since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead, the Air Force has carried out **over 500 sorties**, in which **over 500 targets** of Hamas and the other terrorist organizations have been attacked.

Attacks on Military and Security Infrastructure, Administration Facilities and Symbols of Hamas and Other Terrorist Organizations

6. Following is a summary of the outcome of the assaults on December 31, based on announcements by the IDF Spokesman and information that appeared in the Palestinian media:

   a. **Mosque that served as a storehouse for armaments**: the Air Force attacked a mosque that served as an arms storage place and from which terrorist activity was launched, in the Tel El-Hawa neighborhood of Gaza City. The strike caused a **long series of secondary explosions** from armaments and ammunition that were stored in the mosque (including rockets, some of which were long-range Grad rockets). The raid took place following intelligence received over the past days indicating that many fighting operations were being launched **out of and in the vicinity of the mosque**. These operations included storing weapons, **firing rockets into Israeli territory** (including fire on the morning of December 31), and a hiding place for terror operatives (IDF Spokesman, December 31).

   b. **Administration facilities and symbols of authority**: The Air Force attacked legislative council buildings and the justice ministry in Gaza City, on the night of December 31.

   c. **Tunnels**: The IDF continued attacking the tunnel infrastructure. Five tunnels used by Hamas for smuggling, among other things, were targeted.

   d. **Production site and armaments storage in the center of the Gaza Strip**: A tunnel had been dug under the site.
e. A Hamas outpost in Rafah and a coastal security outpost near Gaza City.

Right: Islamic University in Gaza, which was a center for developing weapons (Photo: Online forum of the Izz al-din al-Qassam Brigades, December 31, 2008). Left: Below the Hamas administration offices in Gaza (Paltoday, website of the Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ), January 1, 2009).

7. According to the Palestinian press, many other sites were hit as well, including:

f. The ASIDAA communications complex in Khan Yunis.

g. The house of an Izz al-din al-Qassam Brigades operative, Anas Abu Shabana, in the Al Shabura neighborhood of Rafah.

h. The house of a Hamas operative, Fawzi Abu El-Naja, in the Al-Bala’wi refugee camp.

i. The house of a senior Izz al-din al-Qassam Brigades operative, Zahar Al-Farah, in the Bena’a refugee camp in Rafah.


k. The house of a senior Izz al-din al-Qassam Brigades operative, Rafa Salama, in Gaza.

l. The house of a senior Popular Resistance Committees operative, Hassan Nasman.

m. The Al-Katiba center in Khan Yunis, which serves as a national security outpost.

n. A money-exchange office in Gaza.

o. A lathe shop where armaments were manufactured in Khan Yunis.
Hamas official Abd al-Qader Nizar Ghayan was killed

8. On December 31, the Air Force attacked the house of Abd al-Qader Nizar Ghayan in the Jabaliya refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip. After the strike, many secondary explosions were identified. Hamas’ Palestine-info website reported that Nizar Ghayan was killed along with his family. His home served as an arms storehouse; and underneath it was a tunnel for extricating terror operatives belonging to Hamas’ military wing (IDF Spokesman, January 1).

9. Nizar Ghayan was a high official in the Hamas leadership and one of its extremists. He was involved in the military set-up of the Izz al-din al-Qassam Brigades. He was 49 years old and had four wives. Nizar Ghayan sent one of his sons to carry out a suicide attack on the Eli Sinai settlement (October 2001) in which two Israelis were murdered.

Palestinian casualties

10. According to Palestinian reports, so far some 400 Palestinians have been killed and 1,900 wounded. Most of the casualties in the IDF attacks were terrorist operatives. Some of the casualties in the attacks were civilians, who were in or near buildings or facilities belonging to the terrorist organizations.
Israeli measures to prevent harm to the civilian population

11. In the course of Operation Cast Lead, Israel has taken a number of measures aimed at preventing, insofar as possible, harm to the civilian population in the Gaza Strip and at focusing the Air Force strikes on terror facilities and operatives. In this context, messages with the following gist were conveyed to the residents of Gaza:

   a. The IDF is acting only against the terrorist organizations.
   
   b. The IDF will target any person or building where arms or ammunition are located.
   
   c. Anyone whose house is concealing armaments must evacuate the house.

12. These messages were conveyed in a number of manners, including dropping notices, temporarily overriding the local radio station frequencies serving the Palestinian terror organizations, and sending messages to residents by telephone. Regarding the latter method, the IDF has made approximately 100,000 phone calls so far (IDF Spokesman, December 31).

Example of a notice directed at Rafah residents (Published on a Fatah Internet forum)
Intensive rocket and mortar shell firing continues

13. On the fifth day of the operation, the firing of rockets and mortars at Israel continued at a rate similar to the previous day. During December 31, 43 rocket landings were identified and 25 mortars were fired. The rockets were aimed at Beersheba, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Netivot, Sderot, and other communities near the Gaza Strip. Most of the firing was done by Hamas. Following are the main incidents:

a. **Beersheba**: Five rockets fell during the day in the city of Beersheba, at the outer range of the rockets. One of them landed in a school in a city neighborhood, ripping a hole in the ceiling of one of the classrooms. The building suffered extensive damage. Eight people were stricken with severe anxiety and sent to the hospital.

![The school classroom that was hit in Beersheba (Foreign Ministry, December 31)](image)

b. **Ashkelon**: Three rockets landed in Ashkelon; a few civilians were stricken with severe anxiety.

c. **Sderot** and other communities in the western Negev also took rocket landings.

14. On Thursday, January 1, the firing continued. In the afternoon, a rocket scored a direct hit on the top floor of an apartment building in Ashdod, and fire broke out in the building. The rocket damaged an electric power line and there was a power outage in the area. Some 30 people suffered severe anxiety and were treated on site. Two more rockets landed in open areas in Ashkelon; there were no casualties and no damages.
Rocket landings and mortar fire during Operation Cast Lead

To date 217 rockets have landed and 95 mortars have been fired in Operation Cast Lead (as of December 31).

Beersheba as a target of long-range rocket fire

15. Starting December 30, the fourth day of Operation Cast Lead, the city of Beersheba was also brought into the circle of rocket fire for the first time. The rockets fired at the city were of the standard 122-mm Grad type, whose range is approximately 40 km. To date seven rockets have landed in Beersheba and its environs. Due to the firing at Beersheba the Home Front Command decided to expand the area in which a “special situation” has been declared.

16. On December 30, close to 9:00 p.m., a rocket landed in a kindergarten in one of the Beersheba city neighborhoods, causing damage. No children were on site due to the late hour. A civilian close to the location was slightly injured and a few other people suffered shock.

The damage inflicted on the Beersheba kindergarten (Photo by Herzl Yosef, Ynet, December 30).
17. On December 31, at 8:45 a.m., a rocket landed on a school in one of the city neighborhoods. As a result, a hole with a diameter of about one and half meters was ripped in the ceiling of one of the classrooms. The building suffered severe damage. Studies were not taking place in the school due to an earlier decision by the Home Front Command and Beersheba’s mayor. A few more rockets landed throughout the city and its outskirts; there were no casualties and no damage.

18. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert (January 1) and Defense Minister Ehud Barak (December 31) visited the school that was damaged. During their visit, Ehud Barak said that Israel will continue to intensify the operation until it achieves the goals for whose sake it was started (Ynet, December 31).
The transfer of humanitarian aid to the residents of the Gaza Strip

Overview

19. Throughout Operation Cast Lead, Israel has seen to the continuous transfer of humanitarian aid to the residents of the Gaza Strip. This aid includes food, drugs and medical equipment. Israel allows an average of 90 trucks per day to cross. In addition, Egypt allows the transfer of humanitarian aid and the evacuation of wounded for treatment in Egypt, through the Rafah Crossing.

20. On January 1, 2009, UNWRA is expected to begin distributing food for some 750,000 Palestinians who will arrive at aid centers in the Gaza Strip. The agencies reported that according to their information, the Rafah Crossing is expected to remain open to meet the Palestinians’ needs (Al Arabiya TV, December 31). The Red Cross reported on the organization’s website (December 31) that the situation in Shifa Hospital in Gaza has stabilized, and that it has most of the required medicines and equipment in stock. The United Nations Food Program (UFP) also reported that its organization does not intend to bring additional food into Gaza, since its warehouses are full. England also transferred a total of $10 billion in urgent aid – consisting of food and gasoline (Reuters, December 31).

Continued humanitarian aid arriving from Israel

21. On December 31, Israel allowed the transfer of 93 trucks carrying humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom Crossing. Civilians posing humanitarian cases also continue to be allowed into Israel, through the Erez Crossing. On December 31, 12 wounded people from the Gaza Strip, including two children, were moved through the Erez crossing to receive medical attention in Israel.

22. Since the beginning of the operation, Israel has transferred over 6,500 tons of food and humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip. Israel allows the transfer of all required aid by the aid organizations and donor countries.
The transfer of Arab aid and wounded through the Rafah crossing

23. The Arab and Muslim countries are continuing to collect and transfer humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip. Following is a summary of the humanitarian aid that was sent to Gaza on December 31, and is expected arrive within the next few days:

   a. **Saudi Arabia**: 25 tons of medicine were transferred by Saudi Arabia to the Gaza Strip. The Saudi Health Ministry announced that there is a technical problem in transferring units of blood from Saudi Arabia to the Gaza Strip, and that the medical services in Gaza informed them that there is no problem finding donors. As per the request of the Palestinians in Gaza, Saudi Arabia will send empty bags for units of blood. On December 31, Saudi Arabia also dispatched two planes carrying 20 tons of drugs and medical equipment. These planes are expected to return bringing wounded Palestinians to receive medical treatment in Saudi Arabia (Al-Shark Al-Awsat, December 31).

   b. **Iran**: The Iranian Health Minister met with a Hamas representative in Iran, Abu Asamah Almaty, and told him that hundreds of doctors and nurses in Iran have expressed their willingness to leave for the Gaza Strip. According to him, Iran’s medical delegations have failed in their attempts to enter the Gaza Strip, due to Egypt's closure of the border. He also said that Iran is willing to accept wounded from the Gaza Strip, and that a special center has been set up to collect food and medical equipment for the Gaza Strip (IRNA, December 31).

   c. **Egypt**: Four tons of medicine from the Red Cross in Egypt has been transferred into the Gaza Strip. Over the past 24 hours, about 25 wounded have been moved into Egypt through the Rafah Crossing. The head of the crossings in the Palestinian Embassy in Egypt said that few patients have been transferred because there are not enough ambulances to transport the wounded from the Gaza Strip into Egypt (PalPress, December 31).

   d. **Jordan**: Jordan sent another aid convoy on December 31. Jordan also announced that it is willing to accept Palestinian wounded (Jordanian News Agency, December 31). Jordan’s aid convoys pass through Israel to reach the Gaza Strip.

   e. **Libya**: Libya transferred ten ambulances and 25 tons of medicine.
Confrontations continue between Palestinians and Egyptian security forces

24. Confrontations between Palestinians and the Egyptian security forces continued along the border between Egypt and the Gaza Strip. On December 31, an Egyptian police officer was wounded in Rafah from shooting that came from the Palestinian side. A mortar shell and a hand grenade were also found in the area during searches carried out by the Egyptian forces (Middle Eastern News Agencies, December 31).

25. Egypt detained some 50 Hamas operatives who infiltrated into Egypt, and they are now being interrogated. This is in relation to the death of an Egyptian officer on December 28 (Al Masri Al Yom, December 31). In the past few days, the Egyptian security forces have been hunting for Hamas operatives who infiltrated into Egypt. The Egyptian security forces have called upon local residents not to provide assistance to the infiltrators or shelter them in their homes (Al-Ahram, December 31).

Protest actions and disturbances have dwindled in Judah and Samaria

26. In Judah and Samaria, there has been a decline in the extent of the disturbances and confrontations between Palestinians and the Israel security forces that started at the beginning of Operation Cast Lead. At the beginning of the operation, a general strike was declared in all the Judah and Samaria cities, but in the past couple of days a trend of returning to normal life has commenced. On December 31, there were a few protest rallies in West Bank cities, but no special confrontations or clashes with the Israeli security forces were noted. On December 31, no attempts were made to carry out terrorist attacks in Judah and Samaria.
Hamas and the other terrorist organizations

27. Ismail Haniyeh, head of the Hamas administration, who during these past days has refrained from appearing in public, gave a recorded speech he read out from a written page (Al Aqsa channel, December 31). The gist of his speech: Israel is waging a “war of destruction” against the Palestinian people and harming civilians, particularly children (Hamas denies that most of those killed are terrorist operatives); Gaza is not isolated, as evidenced by the demonstrations being carried out on its behalf throughout the Arab world and the humanitarian aid that the Arab states are trying to transfer; the “bloodshed” in Gaza illustrates the need for national internal-Palestinian reconciliation and dialogue, based on releasing “political prisoners” from the jails of the Palestinian Authority. Haniyeh said that the Israeli attacks must be stopped immediately without prior conditions and the crossings must be opened. According to him, only after that will it be possible to hold discussions on all the topics on the agenda.

28. Following are some subjects raised in announcements made by the Hamas spokesman and the spokesmen of other terrorist organizations in the past two days:

- **Messages of deterring the IDF from entering the Gaza Strip**: The Izz al-din al-Qassam Brigades have a large number of female suicide bombers ready to sacrifice themselves in the event that the IDF decides to enter the Gaza Strip in a ground operation (Al Aqsa channel, December 30). Thousands of well-trained fighters, armed with weapons and supplies, including antitank weapons and a large quantity of explosive devices, are entrenching themselves in the northern and eastern Gaza Strip in high preparedness for the Israel ground action. The organizations are working out of a joint war room, according to an orderly work plan, which includes a division of responsibility by regions and streets (Abu Abir, Spokesman of the Popular Resistance Committees, Quds Press Agencies, December 31). Abdullah Shami, an official of the PIJ, warned that the various organizations have armaments, capability, forces and high morale, and are ready for any ground assault (Algerian daily Al-Shuruq, December 31).

- **Hamas is demanding a unilateral cessation of the Israeli assault and the opening of the crossings as a precondition for a lull in the fighting**: Hamas announced that any Arab or international intervention must be based on the “cessation of aggression, lifting the siege, and opening all the crossings” (Palestine

---

1 Hamas intelligence sources are even employing psychological warfare, saying that the Izz al-din al-Qassam Brigades have succeeded, supposedly, in deceiving Israel by “supplying false targets,” the bombing of which has not impaired the ability of the “resistance” (Al-Majd, the website of Hamas’ interior security mechanism, December 31).
Hamas official **Iman Taha** said that if any kind of a proposal for a ceasefire is presented to Hamas, they will consider it: “We support any initiative for immediately ceasing the aggression and fully lifting the blockade” (Reuters, December 31). Hamas refuses a lull in the fighting with Israel that does not include opening the crossings to the Gaza Strip (Al Hayat, December 31). Russian Foreign Minister Serge Lavrov said that in a telephone conversation with the head of the Hamas political bureau, **Khaled Mashal**, the latter told him that Hamas is willing to stop its attacks on condition that the siege on Gaza is ended (French News Agencies, December 31).

c. **Conveying a (false) message of “business as usual”**: A Hamas police spokesman, Islam Shahwan, gave an interview to Al Aqsa radio staff (December 31), in which he said that the police are continuing to function as usual and that its people are continually at their place of work, as per instructions from police headquarters. Shahwan specified that police activity in ongoing in the criminal realm, including arresting drug dealers and thieves. However, he added, the police’s job is also to “maintain and defend the internal front, **in order to protect our brothers the resistance fighters** [terrorist operatives] and keep them from despairing…”

**Photos bolstering Hamas’ propaganda machine**

(From the Izz al-din al-Qassam Brigades website, December 31)

**Weapons aimed at Israel aircraft**
(Izz al-din al-Qassam Brigades website forums, December 31, 2008)

Poster from the Izz al-din al-Qassam Brigades forum on December 27: The title reads: “At your command, Al Aqsa.” Underneath is written “We will build a bridge [to Al Aqsa] built from the skulls of the sons of Zion.”
Call for the Security Council to convene

29. The Egyptian Minister of Defense, Ahmed Abu Alheith, said that it was decided at a meeting of the Arab foreign ministers to ask the Security Council to convene immediately. The goal is get a resolution passed for the cessation of the Israeli actions, opening of the crossings, and “lifting of the blockade” (Al Jazeera, December 31). The Egyptian ambassador to the UN announced that he had submitted a draft proposal for the resolution to the Security Council on behalf of the Arab states, including an immediate ceasefire, opening the transit points, transferring humanitarian and economic aid, restoring the lull in the fighting and continuing the peace process (Egyptian satellite television, January 1). A UN spokesperson said that the Security Council would meet on the night of January 1 to discuss the situation in the Gaza Strip behind closed doors (French News Agency, December 31).

Pulling the Al Manar TV channel off the Egyptian satellite?

30. The Iranian television channel Alalam quoted Egyptian “media sources” as saying that Israel had directed an official request to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to ban broadcasts by the Al Manar channel on the Egyptian communications satellite. This comes in wake of Hassan Nasrallah’s last speech, in which he called for a popular uprising against the Egyptian regime (El Nashra website, Lebanon, December 30).

31. Broadcasts by the Hezbollah television station, including harsh words of incitement against the Egyptian government, were indeed aired to the Arab/Muslim world and many other countries by the Nilesat satellites (under Egyptian control) and Arabsat (an Arab satellite in which Saudi Arabia plays a dominant part). The meaning of being aided by these satellites is that Egypt and Saudi Arabia are helping disseminate Hezbollah’s incitement broadcasts that draw inspiration from Iran and are directed against not only Israel but also their own governments and those in other pro-Western Arab states. Al Manar transmissions are also being distributed by an Indonesian communications satellite2.

---

2 See our information bulletin: “Communications and terrorism: Hezbollah’s Al-Manar TV channel has started broadcasting via an Indonesian satellite, after being taken off a Thai satellite. The Indonesian satellite covers East Asia, China, and Australia. Indonesia is a Muslim country, making it more difficult for the international community to fight the incitement aired by Hezbollah [backed by Iran]” (September 4, 2008).
Operation Cast Lead
Update No. 6

Final preparations before the land operation (IDF Spokesman, January 3, 2009).
The IDF Initiates Land Operation in the Gaza Strip

Overview

1. On January 3, after eight days of air strikes, the ground phase of Operation Cast Lead began. It included large infantry, armored, engineering artillery and intelligence forces supported by the Israeli Air Force and the Israel Security Agency and other security factors. On January 4 an IDF soldier was killed in the Jabaliya area in the northern Gaza Strip, apparently by mortar shell fire. An officer and soldier were critically wounded, and about 20 were slightly wounded.

2. The objective of the ground phase is to seriously damage Hamas’s land networks and to take control of the areas from which rockets and mortar shells are fired into Israeli territory. That will serve the overall goals of the operation, which are to strike at Hamas’s military infrastructure and to reinforce Israel’s deterrent capabilities to create a better, more stable, long-term security situation around the Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, January 3, 2009).

Initial Description of the IDF’s Activity during the Past 24 Hours

3. Preparatory artillery bombardment for the incursion into the Gaza Strip: At 1600 hours on January 3 the IDF began a prolonged artillery bombardment along the Gaza Strip, especially targeting the rocket launching areas around Beit Lahiya and Beit Hanoun in the northern Gaza Strip, and Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip. It was the first time the IDF fired artillery at terrorist targets in three years.

Final preparations before the land incursion (IDF Spokesman, January 3, 2009).

4. Land activity: At 2000 hours on January 3 a large force composed of infantry, tanks and the engineer corps entered the Gaza Strip, supported by the IAF and the Israeli Navy.
Exchanges of fire continued between the IDF and terrorist operatives (as of the afternoon of January 4, 2009).

5. **Naval activity**: Following an Israeli defense ministry decision and a security assessment of the situation on January 3, the Gazan coastal waters were closed off for a distance of 20 miles from the shore (IDF Spokesman, January 3, 2009).

6. **The Israeli Air Force**: Since the beginning of the land operation the IAF has attacked more than 50 targets.¹ They included tunnels, armed squads of terrorists, weapons storehouses, mortar shell launching squads and a number of mortar shell launching areas. Israeli boats supported the ground forces and attacked Hamas's General Security headquarters in the Shati refugee camp, Hamas shore patrol positions, and rocket launching positions.

7. **Reserve call-up**: With the beginning of the second phase of Operation Cast Lead on December 3, 2009, according to an assessment of the situation and decision made by the Political Cabinet, reserve units were called up as reinforcements. Most of the reserves belonged to fighting units, some to the Home Front Command and the rest to various other branches (IDF Spokesman, January 3, 2009).

**Attacks on Terrorist Targets, January 1-3, 2009**²

7. On January 1-3 the IAF attacked many terrorist objectives in the Gaza Strip, including mosques which served as arsenals and terrorist operative bases, Hamas military-terrorist operatives, locations where weapons were manufactured and stored; rocket launchers, rocket launching squads and ground, and symbols of Hamas's administration. Between the beginning of Operation Cast Lead and the land operation phase, the IDF attacked more than 900 targets in the Gaza Strip.

8. The following data are based on IDF Spokesman announcements and information in the Palestinian media:
   
   i) **January 1**: During the night the IAF attacked the Al-Khulafa mosque in Jabaliya, which was a focal point of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades’ terrorist activities. It served as an important Hamas operations room where organization meetings were held and from which operatives were dispatched to carry out terrorist attacks against Israel. In addition, it contained a rocket arsenal which included long-range standard Grad

---

¹ As of the early afternoon hours of January 4.
² As of the IDF land incursion.
rockets. The attack on the mosque was followed by a long series of secondary explosions and burned for a long time, indicating that a large quantity of hidden weapons and ammunition had been stockpiled in it.

ii) **January 1**: The IAF attacked the house of Nabil Amarin, a senior Hamas military operative who commanded a Hamas battalion in the Sheikh Radwan neighborhood in Gaza City. The building contained a large quantity of weapons and ammunition. The attack was followed by large secondary explosions.

iii) **January 2**: Shorty after rockets were launched at Ashqelon, IAF places located the launchers in the northern Gaza Strip and attacked them, reporting direct hits.

iv) **January 2**: The house of Hamas operative Muhammad Maatouk was attacked in Jabaliya. It had served as a weapons storehouse and also contained a laboratory with a tunnel used by Hamas operatives.

v) **January 2**: The house of Muhammad Madhoun was attacked in Gaza City. Madhoun was a prominent Hamas operative and responsible for rocket fire into Israeli territory.

vi) **January 2**: The house of Imad Akel was attacked in Nusseirat in the central Gaza Strip. He was a senior weapons manufacturer and one of the heads of Hamas’s rocket division. His house served as a weapons storehouse and the attack was followed by a series of secondary explosions.

vii) **January 2**: Following intelligence, the IAF attacked a vehicle in Gaza City. Its passenger was a battalion commander in Gaza City and responsible for rocket launching squads.

viii) **January 2**: A Hamas institute was attacked in Al-Atatra in the northern Gaza Strip. It served as a meeting and hiding place for Hamas operatives and extensive rocket fire had been carried out from the area.

ix) **January 2**: The IAF attacked the house of Ismail Ghanem in Beit Lahiya in the northern Gaza Strip. It served as a storehouse for weapons and rocket launching equipment. Ghanem is one of the most prominent operatives firing Grads into Israel.

x) **January 2**: The IAF attacked the house of Izz al-Din Hadad, a senior Hamas operator in Saja’iya, the northern Gaza Strip. It served as a meeting place and operations center for Hamas operatives.

xi) **January 2**: The IAF attacked the control tower at the Dahaniya airport in the southern Gaza strip. Beneath it was a tunnel planned to be used to carry out a terrorist attack and abduct an IDF soldier.
9. In addition, at least five tunnels under the Egyptian-Gaza border were attacked, as were eight storehouses and locations for manufacturing weapons, five Hamas posts, rocket launchers and rocket launching areas, mosques serving terrorist purposes, houses of terrorist operatives and the offices of the Hamas magazine Al-Risala in Gaza City during the IDF ground operation.

![Explosion at the gas terminal in the Zeitun neighborhood of Gaza City during the land operation (Al-Jazeera TV, January 3, 2009).](image)

**Palestinian Casualties**

10. Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead, about 500 Palestinians have been killed and about 2000 wounded, most of them operatives belonging to Hamas and the other terrorist organizations. In addition, after the ground phase of the operation began, there were reports that dozens of Palestinian terrorist operatives had been killed in firefights with IDF forces.

**Fatah Claims Continuing Hamas Oppression in the Gaza Strip**

11. According to reports, Hamas continues sowing terror among the residents of the Gaza Strip and oppressing Fatah activists, even in the midst of Operation Cast Lead. The Fatah-affiliated PalPress website reported that Hamas operatives sent orders to hundreds of Fatah activists in the Gaza Strip confining them to their houses, only allowing them to leave to attend Friday prayers. According to the reports, Hamas operatives in the streets of Gaza shot the scores of Fatah activists who disobeyed the order in the legs (PalPress website, January 2)
Marginal Decrease in the Amount of Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire

12. Over the weekend there was a marginal decrease in the amount of rocket and mortar shell fire into Israeli territory. Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead, **295 rockets and 115 mortar shells** have fallen in the southern part of the country. Since the New Year, the attacks have been the following:

i) **Thursday, January 1:** Twenty-nine rockets and two mortar shells landed. Some were long-range rockets and fell in Ashdod, sending 19 civilians into shock. Three rockets fell in Ashqelon during the day, sending a few civilians into shock.

ii) **Friday, January 2:** Twenty-seven rockets and one mortar shell landed. Seven long-range rockets fell in and around Ashqelon, one of them on the central bus station. Some fell in and around Sderot. A few civilians went into shock.

iii) **Saturday, January 3:** Twenty-two rockets and 17 mortar shells landed, identified in the cities of Netivot, Ashqelon and Ashdod, and other population centers.
13. On the night of January 3, after the beginning of the land operations, **four rockets** landed (one in Ashdod) and **nine mortar shells**. A number of mortar shells were fired at the IDF forces operating near the Jabaliya refugee camp, wounding 17 soldiers. On the morning of January 4 several rockets fell in Israeli territory. One fell in Ashdod, damaging a store. One was a direct hit on a house in Sderot. Several rockets fell in Ashqelon and in Israeli villages close to the Gaza Strip.

**Rockets and Mortar Shells Fired at Israel during Operation Cast Lead**

14. During the two days preceding the ground operation, humanitarian aid continued flowing into the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom crossing. On January 1, **90 trucks** entered carrying humanitarian aid, and on January 2, **66 trucks**. In addition, on January 2, 226 Palestinian civilians with dual citizenship left through the Erez crossing and were evacuated to Jordan. On January 3 the crossings remained closed, as they are every Saturday, with the exception of Palestinians with humanitarian problems who were permitted to leave through the Erez crossing. Since the beginning of the operation 450 trucks carrying humanitarian aid have entered the Gaza Strip, as have 10 ambulances.
15. On January 1 the Egyptians opened the Rafah crossing to allow 450 Palestinians who had been delayed in Egypt to return to the Gaza Strip (Al-Yawm Al-Sabaa, January 1). About 200 wounded Palestinians have left through the crossing for medical treatment in Egypt and other countries.

16. In addition, during the past few days dozens of trucks have entered the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing, including those sent by other Arab countries. On the evening of January 3, the crossing was closed because of IDF attacks in the Rafah region (Wafa News Agency, January 3).

17. At the same time, the Egyptians continue taking security precautions along the Egyptian-Gaza Strip border, fearing that Palestinians will try to breach it now that the IDF has undertaken a ground operation (Al-Quds Al-Arabi, January 2). On January 2 hundreds of Palestinians tried to break through the border near the Rafah crossing. Exchanges of fire took place between the Egyptian security forces and armed Palestinians (Al-Yawm Al-Sabaa, January 2). On January 3 an Egyptian soldier was wounded in an exchange of fire with Palestinians (Agence France Presse, January 3).

18. The Arab-Muslim countries have been organizing humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip. Most of the goods are delivered through the Rafah crossing. As of December 31, the following aid has either been given or pledged:

   i) Jordan: A number of wounded Palestinians were taken to Jordan by helicopter for medical treatment.
ii) **Saudi Arabia:** On January 1, 25 wounded Palestinians were air-lifted to Saudi Arabia for medical treatment. It also pledged $8 million to the residents of the Gaza Strip.

iii) **Syria:** A convoy of 11 trucks carrying 200 tons of food and medicine was sent.

iv) **Bahrain:** Two planes carrying 80 tons of medicine were sent.

v) **Lebanon:** $250,000 worth of food and drugs will be sent through Jordan to the Gaza Strip.

vi) **Sudan:** One ton of medical aid will be sent.

vii) **Qatar:** Four tons of medical aid will be sent.

19. International relief agencies and various countries are also sending humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip. On January 1 **UNRWA** distributed 750 thousand aid packages to the Gazan population (Al-Jazeera TV, January 1). **Spain** pledged medical aid worth $1.5 million. **Britain** will contribute $10 million. **Russia** sent two planes of humanitarian aid, which landed in El-Arish. **Turkey** sent ten trucks carrying 11 thousand aid packages which will enter the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom crossing.

![Left: A consignment of humanitarian aid from Syria on its way to the Gaza Strip via Jordan (Al-Jazeera TV, January 3, 2009). Right: Humanitarian aid from Turkey delivered through the Kerem Shalom crossing (IDF Spokesman, January 2, 2009).](image)

**Disturbances in Judea and Samaria**

20. Over the weekend disturbances continued in Judea and Samaria to protest the IDF activity in the Gaza Strip. In some cases demonstrators confronted IDF forces. The Palestinian security services were present at the main demonstrations in Judea and Samaria, confronting them to keep them from facing the Israeli security forces. A number of Palestinians were wounded by riot control equipment used to disperse the demonstrations.
Reactions

Hamas

21. The first reaction of Hamas’s military-terrorist wing, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, to the IDF incursion was to threaten the forces with “a bitter fate,” noting that “the Zionist enemy is now approaching the trap prepared for him by the al-Qassam fighters.” One of the local Hamas commanders said that the organization’s preparedness had not been damaged during the week of aerial bombings and that its operatives continued engaging in routine activities (Palestine-info website, January 4, 2008).

22. Musa Abu Marzuq, deputy head of Hamas’s political bureau, said that the war in the Gaza Strip had so far harmed many civilians, but that Israel had not harmed the movement’s top military commanders. He harshly criticized the position taken by the Arab countries and called on them to work to put an end to the Israeli activity and for the opening of the Gaza Strip crossings (PalPress website, January 2). He said the “resistance” (i.e., the terrorist organizations) would do everything to protect the Palestinian people, including the use of weapons “which no one has seen so far” (BBC, January 3).

Egypt

23. Egypt appealed to Hamas, despite the bad blood between them, and asked them to send a delegation to Cairo to discuss a return to the lull arrangement (Al-Safir, January 3).

24. President Hosni Mubarak appealed to Israel and the Palestinians to stop the fighting, and said his country was always willing to help the Palestinians (Egyptian TV, January 2). At a press conference, Egyptian foreign minister Ahmed Abu al-Ghait again accused Hamas of responsibility for the situation, saying it had presented Israel with the opportunity to attack the Gaza Strip “on a silver platter.” However, he appealed to Israel to stop the attacks (Middle East News Agency, January 1).

Iran

25. Demonstrations and rallies in support of Hamas and condemnation of Israel continue in Iran, along with criticism of the “silence” of the Arab countries. After the Friday prayers hundreds of Iranians demonstrated against the IDF activity in the Gaza Strip and shouted slogans against Israel in Palestine Square (ISNA News Agency, January 2). More than 4,000 students held a solidarity march in Tehran, shouting slogans against Israeli and the United States. Some of the statements made were the following:
i) Iranian president Ahmadinejad criticized Israel, claiming its actions were worse than those of “Pharaoh in Egypt” (Press TV website, January 1). He also held a telephone conversation with the chairman of the Islamic Conference to examine ways of helping the Gazan (Islamic Republic News Agency, January 1).

ii) Iranian foreign minister Mottaki warned Israel not to enter the Gaza Strip, saying that if it did, it would be severely harmed. He said that Israel would have had no justification if the Arab countries had untied, condemned the action and isolated Israel. He said that a number of Arab countries had “betrayed Hamas” when they promised that Israel would not attack it (ISNA News Agency, January 2).

iii) Saeed Jalili, Iranian National Security Council Secretary, left for Damascus to discuss the situation in the Gaza Strip with senior Syrian officials (ISNA News Agency, January 2). He also spoke with Khaled Mashal, head of Hamas's political bureau in Damascus (ISNA News Agency, January 3).

Hezbollah

26. Senior Hezbollah figures have been trying to encourage Hamas and the Palestinians, and have harshly criticized the events in the Gaza Strip, the silence of the Arab countries and the fact that they have not threatened Israel with intervention on the Palestinian side:

i) Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah secretary general (who makes an almost daily media appearance), encouraged Hamas, saying that the movement had absorbed the first blow, and that he did not doubt it would be victorious over Israel (Al-Manar TV, January 2). He criticized the Arab countries for their position and called on the Gazans to hold out against Israeli aggression and what he called “Arab irresponsibility” (Al-Manar TV, January 2). He also said that faith in Allah and in dying the death of a martyr for the sake of Allah ensured the continuation of the “resistance” and gave it an advantage in its confrontations with Israel. He added that not even the failure of the “resistance” in the Gaza Strip would not lead to wiping it out.
ii) **Naim Qassem**, Hezbollah’s deputy general secretary, gave a speech encouraging the residents of the Gaza Strip, saying that faith and will would lead to victory, not the use of weapons (Lebanese News Agency, January 2). He also said that Iran had nicknamed Israel “the enemy of humanity” and that if the fighting continued for another few days, not only would Israel have to face the Gazans, but “a nation of fighters” (Lebanese News Agency, January 3).

27. Throughout Lebanon demonstrations and protest marches were held, including in Beirut, Tripoli, Tyre, Nabatia and other places. Following the IDF activity in the Gaza Strip and the fierce Hezbollah reactions it prompted, the Lebanese army and UNIFIL increased their patrols along the Israeli-Lebanese border (NowLebanon website, January 2).
January 5, 2009

Operation Cast Lead

Update No. 7

IDF soldiers on their way to the ground operation in the Gaza Strip (Baz Ratner for Reuters, January 3).

Direct hit on a house in Sderot (Photo: Zeev Trachtman, January 4, 2009).
Overview

- IDF forces continue operating in various focal points in the Gaza Strip. According to a defense minister announcement, Gaza City is partially encircled. The Palestinian terrorist organizations still avoid direct confrontations with the IDF but the level of friction has risen. They employ light arms, snipers, IEDs, anti-tank weapons and tunnels. Terrorist targets are still being attacked from the air and sea.

- Since the beginning of the ground operation one Israeli soldier was killed and at least 45 were wounded. So far, scores of terrorists have been killed during the ground operation. The Hamas propaganda machine, supported by Al-Jazeera TV, continues representing the casualties of Operation Cast Lead as civilians.

- Even after the IDF began the ground operation in the Gaza Strip, rocket fire continues. On January 4, 30 rockets fell in Israeli territory, several in Ashdod, Ashqelon and Sderot. The terrorist organizations still manage to fire several dozen rockets daily.

- In the political arena, contacts between Egypt and Hamas are expected to begin at Egypt’s request, with a Turkish initiative to end the fighting on the agenda. So far no proposals or ideas for an agreement have been formulated and matured into a substantial plan.

IDF activities in the past 24 hours

Ground activity

- During the past 24 hours the IDF has continued the ground activity in the Gaza Strip which began on January 3. Its objectives are to complement the aerial attack by taking control of the areas from which rockets are launched, striking Hamas targets and preventing the continuation of its military buildup, all with the goal of eventually changing the basic security situation in southern Israel and strengthening Israel’s deterrent power.

- On January 5 Defense Minister Ehud Barak told a meeting of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that “the operation is proceeding as planned, Gaza City is partially encircled and our forces have reached the ground objectives set out for them” (Ynet, January 5). The soldiers continue fighting terrorist operatives after having taken positions throughout the Gaza Strip (as of the early afternoon of January 5).
During the ground operation IDF soldiers saw a suspicious object which they blew up, exposing three rocket launchers in the Zeitun neighborhood in the northern Gaza Strip, coming into close combat with terrorist operatives. Since the beginning of the ground operation, IDF forces have attacked scores of armed terrorists (IDF Spokesman, January 4).

According to the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, IDF forces operating in eastern Gaza City met with strong resistance. A force which entered the house of a Hamas operative uncovered three tunnels leading out of it. They fought against armed terrorists in the house who tried to escape through the tunnels. During the fighting, the terrorists shot at the soldiers to draw them into one of the tunnels, apparently to abduct one of them, but the attempt failed (Amos Harel and Avi Issacharoff, Haaretz, January 5, 2009). The Hamas and other Palestinian and Arab media consequently issued a fabricated story about the abduction of an Israeli soldier (denied by the IDF Spokesman).

**The call-up of reserves continues**

On January 4 the call-up of reserve forces was extended by order of the political-security cabinet. Thousands of reserve soldiers reported to their bases and are being prepared for ground operations in the Gaza Strip. They have been moved to training camps in southern Israel where they will undergo exercises until they are called to enter the Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, January 4, 2009).

![Serve soldiers preparing to enter the Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, January 4, 2009).](image)

**The Israeli Air Force and Navy activities**

Air and sea attacks also continue. During the past 24 hours the Israeli Air Force attacked more than 45 targets, including tunnels, vehicles, Hamas operative concentrations and rocket launching points. Mortar launching squads and armed terrorists spotted near IDF forces were also attacked. During the night of January 4 the IDF attacked more than 30 targets, including a Hamas bunker. Navy ships attacked a number of targets, including a bunker which served as a weapons storehouse, positions of the Hamas shore patrol and launching sites from which Grad rockets were fired at the city of Ashkelon.

The main targets were the following, according to the IDF Spokesman:
• **Terrorist operatives**: In Khan Yunis the IAF attacked **Husam Hamdan**, a senior Hamas rocket launcher who was responsible for firing Grad rockets at the cities of Beersheba and Ofakim. **Muhammad Hilu** was hurt with him; he was responsible for Hamas’s special forces in Khan Yunis and for long-range artillery fire against Israel.

• **A Hamas bunker in the Gaza City area**: During the attack on the bunker many secondary explosions occurred and tunnels in the area collapsed. A number of tunnels under the Philadelphi route were attacked, as were the houses of four Hamas operatives which served as storehouses for weapons, rocket launchers and what was suspected of being an anti-aircraft gun.

- According to Palestinian reports, a money-changing office in the Gaza Strip was attacked, two Palestinian Islamic Jihad operatives were killed in an attack in the Sabra neighborhood in Gaza City, and a commander of the Popular Resistance Brigades and Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operatives were killed.

### IDF and civilian casualties during Operation Cast Lead³

- Since the beginning of the ground operation on January 3, one Israel soldier was killed and about 40 were wounded. The soldier was Dvir Emanuelof, 22, from Givat Ze’ev in Jerusalem. He was killed fighting in the Jabaliya region of the northern Gaza Strip.

- In the ten days since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead, three Israeli civilians and one soldier have been killed and over 100 wounded, ten of them critically.

---

³ As of the morning of January 5, 2009.
Palestinian casualties

- Since the beginning of the ground operation, scores of terrorist operatives have been killed. Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead, about 550 Palestinians have been killed, most of them terrorist operatives, and more than 2,400 wounded. Hamas consistently lies to the media, claiming that the dead and wounded were civilians, ignoring the great number of terrorist organizations killed.

Hamas reaction to the ground operation

- Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades spokesman Abu Obeida reported on battles waged between Hamas operatives and the IDF. He said that the operatives had detonated a number of IEDs along all the roads taken by the IDF. He claimed that there were many Israeli casualties, while a small number of Hamas operatives had been killed. He warned that the IDF would expect “surprises,” such as the abduction of soldiers (Al-Aqsa TV, January 4, 2005).

Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire into Israel

- During the past 24 hours 30 rockets fell in Israeli territory, three of them 122mm Grads, and seven mortar shells. A number of rockets fell in and around Ashdod, Ashqelon and Sderot. Three civilians were wounded and 11 went into shock; there was considerable property damage. In addition, a large number of mortar shells were fired at the IDF forces operating in the Gaza Strip. Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead 325 rockets and 122 mortar shells have fallen in Israeli territory.
Humanitarian Aid Delivered into the Gaza Strip

Israel

Humanitarian aid from Israel to the Gaza Strip continues

- On January 4 the crossings into the Gaza Strip were not opened for reasons connected to the beginning of the ground operation. However, on January 5 the delivery of humanitarian aid through the Kerem Shalom crossing was renewed. Approximately 80 trucks carrying supplies were expected to pass through during the day. Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead more than 400 trucks and 10 ambulances have entered the Gaza Strip. On January 5 a Red Cross worker in the Gaza Strip admitted to the BBC that goods were entering, saying that the main problem was distributing them.

Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni meets with relief agency representatives

- On January 4 Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni met with representatives of the various relief agencies operating in the Gaza Strip. She told them that every day Israel helped deliver humanitarian aid to the residents of the Gaza Strip. She said that “unfortunately, the hospitals in the Gaza Strip are used by Hamas as operations bases in every respect. Hamas operates from within the civilian population, exploits it for its own criminal needs and is therefore responsible for…the situation in the Gaza Strip” (Israeli Foreign Ministry, January 4).

- The foreign minister updated the heads of the agencies regarding a new, joint humanitarian operations room for the foreign ministry and the coordinator of government activities in the territories, whose task it would be to deal with humanitarian requests made by the various agencies and to help find solutions for problems. The agency representatives congratulated the initiative and called for additional cooperation and aid during the operation.

![Image of Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and representatives of the relief agencies operating in the Gaza Strip (The Israeli Foreign Ministry, January 4, 2009).]
Humanitarian aid through the Rafah crossing continues

- The Arab-Muslim countries continue collecting and sending humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip, most of it delivered through the Rafah crossing. Saudi Arabia is expected to send $3 million worth of aid to the Gaza Strip. The Libyan ship Al-Marwa docked in El-Arish on January 4 with a cargo of 450 tones of humanitarian aid, and a second Libyan ship is on its way. The European Union will send $4.6 million worth of aid to the Gaza Strip though the UN’s relief apparatus (AP, January 4, 2009).

- The governor of Northern Sinai said that the Rafah crossing would open on the morning of January 5, after it had been temporarily closed following IDF attacks in the Rafah area (Al-Jazeera TV, January 4, 2009).

Contacts and Initiatives for a Ceasefire in the Arab and Muslim World

Contacts between Egypt and Hamas

- According to the newspaper Al-Hayat, a senior aide to the Egyptian intelligence head Omar Suleiman appealed to Khaled Mashal, head of the Hamas political bureau in Damascus, to urge him to find a way of bringing the current crisis to an immediate end (Al-Hayat, January 4, 2009). Hamas acceded, and a delegation from the leadership in Damascus, including Imad al-Almi and Muhammad Nasser, is expected to leave for talks in Cairo on January 5 (Al-Aqsa TV, Reuters, January 5, 2009).

The Turkish plan for ending the fighting

- Turkish prime minister Recep Erdogan finished a round of visits to Middle East countries. He spoke with the heads of Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the Palestinian Authority and Egypt, and presented them with the two-stage Turkish plan for ending the fighting (“the Turkish roadmap”). The plan is based on a one-year renewal of the lull arrangement between Israel and Hamas brokered by Egypt, and includes an opening of the crossings, with the emphasis on the Rafah crossing. According to the plan, international forces will be deployed in the Gaza Strip, similar to UNIFIL in Lebanon, including forces from Turkey and other Islamic countries, to oversee the lull and prevent rockets from being fired into Israel (Middle East News Agency, January 4, 2009). The idea to post international forces in the Gaza Strip was immediately rejected by PIJ leader Ramadan Shallah, who advised against sending international forces to the Gaza Strip, warning that they would come to harm.
Difficulties experienced by Hamas’s propaganda apparatus (as of January 5, 2009)

- Hamas’s newspapers Al-Risala and Felesteen, both issued in the Gaza Strip, have ceased publication (Felesteen on January 4, 2009). Al-Aqsa TV continues broadcasting, but its quality is poor. Al-Quds TV, which broadcasts from beyond the Gaza Strip, is operating as usual. Most of Hamas’s websites are operating, but the important one used by the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades stopped operations on January 4. To sum up, Hamas’s propaganda apparatus had been damaged, so far only partially, but nevertheless it continues sending its messages to many target audiences through the Qatari channel Al-Jazeera TV, which as usual, serves Hamas’s propaganda effort.

- One expression of the difficulties Hamas’s propaganda network is having in functioning is the disruption in reports of Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades claims of responsibility for shooting and fighting against the IDF. Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead, and especially since the initiation of the ground operation, claims of responsibility are not made quickly or uniformly as in the past. The reports of Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades activity broadcast over local radio and television stations are not detailed or accompanied by much visual material.
The popular **Al-Jazeera TV** continues its biased, distorted coverage of events in the Gaza Strip, providing a platform for anti-Israel demonstrators throughout the world and broadcasting the frenzied propaganda of radical Islamic spokesmen. Its broadcasts include Hamas propaganda and appalling pictures of the dead and wounded in Gaza’s hospitals. The dead are represented as *civilians*, and no mention of terrorist operatives’ being killed is made. The false claim is often made that Israel hides the number of its dead soldiers. The Hamas media also represent the dead as innocent civilians slaughtered by Israel, with no reference to their being terrorist operatives.

Hamas's local leadership has yet to show itself publicly, with the exception of a few rare appearances by Mahmoud al-Zahar and Ayman Taha. The void is currently filled by Hamas spokesmen Musheir al-Masri and Fawzi Barhoum, Hamas administration spokesman Taher al-Nunu, and the Hamas leadership in Damascus. Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades spokesman Abu Obeida is often interviewed but it is unclear to what degree his statements are accurate representations of Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades activity on the ground.

### Reactions from the Arab-Muslim world

#### Iran

Senior Iranian figures have warned Israel of the results of an ground operation. For example, the head of the Iranian parliament, **Ali Larijani**, said that Gaza would become a graveyard for the IDF forces (“the forces of the Zionist regime”). He praised the fortitude of the terrorist organizations (“the resistance”) against the IDF (Mehr News Agency, January 4, 2009). Iranian foreign minister **Manuchehr Mottaki** appealed to the Arab countries and the international community to take more serious steps in view of Israel’s ground incursion into the Gaza Strip (ISNA News Agency, January 4, 2009).

Various other themes were present in the statements of Iranian senior figures and Iranian propaganda:

- **Accusing Israel of “crimes” against the Palestinians:** The Iranian media repeatedly shows pictures of crying Palestinian children, dead “shaheeds” (senior Hamas terrorist Nizar Rayyan is represented as a “shaheed”) and razed houses. No mention is made of the rockets fired by Hamas, except for exaggerated descriptions of the panic Iran claims they sow on the Israeli home front.

- **Attacks on Egypt and President Mubarak:** An Iranian student organization calling itself “The Iranian Justice-Seeking Students Organization” offered a prize of one
million dollars to anyone anywhere in the world who would kill “the criminal Egyptian president” Hosni Mubarak (Iran’s Fars News Agency, January 4, 2009). Iranian students who barricaded themselves inside the Mashhad airport demanded that the Iranian government close the Straits of Hormuz “until the treacherous Egyptian regime opens the Rafah crossing” (Iran’s Fars News Agency, January 4, 2009).

Posters calling for the hanging of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak (IranPressNews, January 5, 2009).

Beyond ranting at Israel and rhetorical support for the Palestinians, senior Iranian spokesmen have not committed themselves to helping the Palestinians, and some of them denied reports stating that Iran was supporting Hamas. For example, Muhammad Ali Ja’afari, commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, said that the residents of the Gaza Strip did not need military aid from other countries because the geography of the Gaza Strip made it possible for them to continue the “resistance.” He said they had an sufficient number of weapons to protect [Gaza] city and that since they could make their own rockets, they did not need aid from other countries (ISNA News Agency, January 4, 2009). Kazem Jalili, spokesman for the Iranian parliament’s foreign committee, denied Western reports that Iran was sending weapons to the Gaza Strip (Iran’s Fars News Agency, January 4, 2009). Daoud Ahmadi-Nizad, secretary of the committee for passive defense, appealed to students who had barricaded themselves in the Maher-Abad airport, rejecting their request to be sent to Gaza2 (Iran’s Fars News Agency, January 4, 2009).

Jordan

Protests continue throughout Jordan, including demonstrations and rallies. The main protest rally took place in the sports center in Amman and was attended by tens of thousands of demonstrators from all parts of Jordan, as well as members of the parliament, especially from the oppositional factions. When the rally ended, demonstrators tried to go to the Israeli embassy, but security forces dispersed them (Ammon News Agency, January 2, 2009). The

---

2 According to the Iranian media, Mahmoud Muzafar, chairman of the young people’s wing of the Red Crescent Society, said that 100,000 young Iranians expressed willingness to be sent to the Gaza Strip (Iran’s Fars website, January 4, 2009).
Israel ground operation led to a greater wave of demonstrations, which led the Jordan security forces to increase their presence around the Israel embassy in Amman and on the streets leading to it. (Saraya Portal, January 4, 2009).

As popular demonstrations were being held, Jordanian leadership harshly criticized the Israeli action, representing it as “aggression against innocents.” Jordan’s King Abdallah stressed that the kingdom and all its resources were on the side of the Palestinians and that Jordan would make every effort to stop the “Israeli aggression” in the Gaza Strip. (He also demanded that the UN Security Council pass an immediate resolution to stop the Israeli action (Jordanian News Agency, January 4, 2009).

The issue of Jordan’s diplomatic relations with Israel was raised during the protests. Nader Dahabi, Jordanian prime minister, said that if Israel did not stop its military operation, Jordan would weigh all its options, including a change in diplomatic relations. A group of parliament members sent him a memorandum demanding Jordan sever diplomatic relations with Israel, expel the Israeli ambassador and undertake an extensive propaganda campaign against the operation in the Gaza Strip (Ammon News Agency, January 4, 2009).

Syria

The Syrians continue political contacts with their ally, Iran. Ali Larijani, head of the Iranian parliament, is supposed to visit Syria and Lebanon to discuss the events in the Gaza Strip. His visit was preceded by that of Saeed Jalili, Iranian National Security Council secretary, who already visited Syria and met with its leaders (ISNA News Agency, January 3). The Syrian media continue broadcasting intensive anti-Israeli propaganda and incitement about the IDF action in the Gaza Strip, and show pictures of the dead and wounded.

Filler broadcast on Hezbollah’s Al-Manar TV: “The Gazan resistance will crush your soldiers” (Al-Manar TV, January 5, 2009).
Hamas uses the Gazan civilians as human shields during the fighting against the IDF. Mortar shells fired in close proximity to residential houses in a densely populated area (Al-Aqsa TV, January 6, 2009).

Several dozen rockets are still fired into Israeli territory every day: a kindergarten in the city of Ashdod (Yossi Landau, photo courtesy of the ZAKA spokesman, January 6).
**IDF activities in the past 24 hours**

**Ground activities**

- During the past 24 hours the ground operation continued, with increased friction between the IDF and Hamas operatives. Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades terrorist operatives employ a battle strategy which avoids direct confrontation with IDF forces. They attempt to channel the soldiers into the heart of urban and refugee camp areas which they regard as the focal points for fighting the IDF, exploiting civilians as human shields. The IDF’s advance is slow, measured and controlled. Hamas has shown resistance and continues firing mortar shells from close proximity to residential dwellings in an attempt to draw the soldiers into built-up areas. During the ground operation the IDF has killed scores of armed terrorists, while casualties have been caused to the civilian population in areas where Hamas operatives are fighting.

![IDF soldiers fighting in the Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, January 6, 2009).](image)

**Soldiers killed by friendly fire**

- The ground operation necessitates the combined action of the infantry, which fights within a complex, densely-populated, built-up area, accompanied by Israeli Air Force aircraft and artillery and tank support. In two instances, the proximity of the IDF forces to the sources of Hamas fire led to IDF tanks firing on IDF soldiers (Data from the IDF Spokesman):

  - **A tank shell hits an IDF infantry force (Golani):**

    - On the evening of January 4 a shell was mistakenly fired at an area where IDF soldiers were fighting terrorist operatives. The shell hit an abandoned building with a Golani force positioned inside and the building collapsed, killing three IDF soldiers.

---

Another soldier was mortally wounded and three more were critically injured, while 20 were slightly to moderately wounded. Those killed were **Major Dagan Vertman**, 32, from Maaleh Michmas; **Sergeant Nitai Stern**, 21, from Jerusalem; and **Corporal Yusuf Muadi**, 19, from Haifa.

- The wounded received primary medical care on the scene and were later evacuated by helicopter and ambulance under heavy IDF artillery cover to hospitals in Israel. Golani Brigade commander Colonel Avi Peled, who was slightly wounded, directed the evacuation, calling for artillery backup and support from fighter planes.

- A tank shell was mistakenly fired, hitting a building with a paratrooper officer inside, **Captain Yehonatan Netanel**, 26, from Kedumim.

**IDF friendly fire casualties**


- Later the same night five soldiers were slightly wounded by Hamas fire. During the ground operation five officers and soldiers have been killed, and several dozen have been wounded.

**Air Force and Navy activities**

- During the past 24 hours IAF planes attacked dozens of tunnels along the Egyptian-Gaza border. The tunnels belonged to Hamas and served for smuggling weapons into the Gaza Strip. The IAF also continued supporting the ground forces. They attacked armed terrorists in close proximity to IDF forces and launching areas where armed terrorists were organizing to fire at soldiers. Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead, the IDF has attacked **950 terrorist targets** in the Gaza Strip in 1,100 plane and attack helicopter sorties.
Among the targets attacked were Hamas headquarters, sites for manufacturing and storing weapons, the terrorist infrastructure (training camps, police buildings, etc.) and rocket launching sites. In one instance, in a joint IDF-Israel Security Agency action, IAF planes attacked a building in the Jabaliya refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip. Ayman Siam, head of Hamas’s rocket network, was in the building. Siam was one of the founders of the rocket network and commander of all of Hamas’s Gaza Strip artillery.

**Palestinian casualties**

At least 130 Hamas terrorists were killed during the last two days of fighting, according to reports from the forces fighting in the ground operation. In addition, more than 120 terrorists were detained and brought in for interrogation (IDF Spokesman, January 6, 2009). However, because of the massive use made by the terrorists of civilians as human shields, there are liable to be more civilian casualties as the fighting continues in built-up areas, as in fact occurred. So far more than 550 Palestinians have been killed and about 2,500 have been wounded. Most of those killed were terrorist operatives. The UN coordinator for humanitarian affairs noted that about 25% of those killed were reportedly civilians (Al-Jazeera TV, January 6, 2009).

**Using civilians as human shields in fighting in the northern Gaza Strip**

Hamas customarily makes extensive use of civilians as human shields. It situates its military facilities and terrorist operatives in civilian houses and public institutions, and wages fighting from densely populated areas. Initial reports from the fighting arena indicate that Hamas has used the human shield tactic during the current fighting. In addition, they have forced civilians not to abandon their houses and prevented them from escaping to the south. Hamas also tries to collect the flyers dropped by Israel to prevent residents from evacuating their houses.
Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire

- Rocket fire into Israeli territory continues at the rate of several dozen hits a day. During the past 24 hours 25 rockets landed in Israeli territory, four of them 122mm Grad rockets; seven mortar shells also hit. A number of rockets fell in the cities of Ashqelon, Ashdod and Sderot, and in other Negev towns and villages. About ten civilians were treated for shock. Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead, 350 rockets and 129 mortar shells have landed in Israel; mortar shells are also fired at the IDF forces operating in the Gaza Strip.

- At 1530 hours, long-range rockets fell in the center of the city of Ashdod on a kindergarten, causing extensive property damage. Several civilians were treated for shock but there were no injuries, because according to Home Front Command orders, educational institutions in Ashdod are closed. A number of nearby buildings were also damaged, one of them a synagogue.
Left: Removing a rocket from a soccer field in a regional council near the Gaza Strip (Zeev Trachtman, January 5, 2009). Right: A bombed-out kindergarten in the city of Ashdod (Yossi Landau, photo courtesy of the ZAKA spokesman, January 6).

Rockets and Mortar Shells Fired at Israel during Operation Cast Lead

![Bar chart showing rockets and mortar shells fired daily during Operation Cast Lead](chart.png)
Delivering humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip

**Israel**

**Deliveries of humanitarian aid continue**

- On January 5 Israel delivered **49 trucks** through the Kerem Shalom crossing. Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead, 450 trucks carrying humanitarian aid have entered the Gaza Strip. On January 6, 82 trucks entered. Distributing the aid to the Palestinians is delayed because of problems on the Palestinian side.

![Humanitarian aid delivered to the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom crossing, January 5 (IDF Spokesman, January 5, 2009).](image)

**Deliveries of humanitarian aid through the Rafah crossing**

- On January 5 the Rafah crossing was opened. Through it passed:
  - Twenty wounded Palestinians from the Gaza Strip to Egypt.
  - A convoy of 12 tons of aid from Saudi Arabia.
  - A convoy from Qatar.
  - A convoy from Malaysia.
  - A convoy from Turkey (Egypt did not permit the entrance of two additional Turkish convoys).

- On January 5 more humanitarian aid arrived in Egypt which is expected to be delivered to the Gaza Strip. Turkey, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Libya and Qatar sent planes with humanitarian aid for the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. The following countries are also expected to send aid:
  - **Lebanon**: Al-Manar TV announced that a Lebanese plane had landed in Jordan carrying 20 tons of equipment for the Palestinians.
  - **India**: India will send a million dollars worth of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip.
• **Egypt**: On January 5 Egypt sent ten trucks through the Kerem Shalom crossing.

• **Sweden**: Sweden will contribute $1.3 million to the UN fund for Gaza Strip relief.

---

The governor of the Sinai district confirmed that the Rafah crossing would remain open to the passage of Palestinians with humanitarian problems. In addition, trucks have entered the Gaza Strip with food and medicine (Middle East News Agency, January 5). At the same time, Egypt is taking security measures along its Gazan border. On January 5 the Egyptian security forces detained 22 Palestinians who had infiltrated into Egypt.

### Humanitarian Problems in the Gaza Strip Worsen

Recently, the humanitarian problems in the Gaza Strip worsened as a result of the fighting and Hamas administration’s dysfunction. Blackouts have been reported throughout the Gaza Strip resulting from the collapse of power lines. Kanaan Abaid, deputy chairman of the Palestinian Energy Authority, claimed it was impossible to send teams to fix power failure because of the attendant danger (Filastin al-Yawm, January 4). The local authorities reportedly do not function, garbage is not collected and the basic infrastructure is not repaired. In addition, there is a lack of goods usually smuggled in from Egypt because the tunnels have been bombed by the IDF.

### Contacts between Egypt and Hamas to Stop the Fighting

On January 5 a delegation of Hamas representatives from both the Damascus and Gaza leadership arrived in Cairo for talks, at Egypt’s request. It included **Imad al-Alami** and **Mahmoud Nasser** from Damascus, and **Iman Taha** and **Jamal Abu Hashem** from the Gaza Strip.

Regarding the delegation to Egypt, **Musa Abu Marzuq**, deputy head of Hamas’ political bureau in Damascus, said a ceasefire would have to relate to the following three issues (Quds Press Agency, January 5):

- **A mutual cease fire**: first Israel would end the IDF action in the Gaza Strip, and after that rocket fire would stop.

- **An IDF withdrawal** from the Gaza Strip.

- **An opening** of all the Gaza Strip crossings.
**Egyptian foreign minister Abu el-Gheit** called on all the Palestinian organizations to hold an urgent meeting in Cairo to reach an agreement about ways of dealing with Israel. He added that Egypt was in contact with Israel about opening the Rafah crossing for delivering food to the Gaza Strip, but that it was not the time to open the Rafah crossing permanently (Radio Sawa, January 4).

Interviewed by Al-Arabiya TV on January 5, El-Gheit noted the following:

- The **ceasefire** would require Israel to stop its activities in the Gaza Strip and withdraw, in return for which Hamas and the other organizations would stop firing rockets.
- The **Rafah crossing** would open for the delivery of medicine and medical equipment to the Gaza Strip, and anyone who was skeptical could “go to the crossing and see for himself.” He also said that the November 2005 crossings agreement was to be implemented and that the European delegation (which had visited Egypt) expressed its willingness to send additional inspectors.
- Stationing **international inspection forces** in the Gaza Strip had been suggested. Its role would be to prove that there was no rocket fire or other provocation from the Palestinian side, and to oversee the opening and closing of the crossings.
- As to the **tunnels**, he said that “Egypt is doing everything it can to take control of them.”

**Disruptions in Hamas’s Propaganda Apparatus**

Disruptions continue in the functioning of Hamas’s propaganda apparatus. The **Palestine-info** website, its main portal, could not be accessed on January 6. The Hamas newspapers, **Felesteen** and **Al-Risala**, have stopped publication. **Al-Aqsa TV**’s website operates only partially. On the other hand, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website could be accessed as of January 6 after several days of inactivity. According to its homepage, it was attacked by “Zionist hackers” as part of Israel’s “propaganda war.”

Hamas’s Al-Aqsa TV, which broadcasts anti-Israeli and anti-Western propaganda and incitement, announced it would begin transmitting via the European **Eurobird** satellite. The
corporation running the satellite company has its main offices in Paris\(^2\) (an Information Bulletin will shortly be posted).

- **Al-Jazeera TV** continues providing strategic support for Hamas’s faltering propaganda apparatus. It broadcasts Al-Aqsa TV videos and provides a platform for Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades spokesman Abu Obeida. It continues extensively broadcasting pictures of the bodies of women and children, reports only on civilian casualties (ignoring those of terrorist operatives), and broadcasts emotional protest demonstrations from the Muslim world. It also broadcasts Hamas’s lies regarding the “blow” the “resistance” (i.e., the terrorist organizations) has dealt to the IDF, which it claims “slaughters civilians” and does not achieve anything by its military action.

![Abu Obeida on Al-Aqsa TV, rebroadcast via Al-Jazeera TV](image)

**Middle East Reactions**

**Hamas**

- During the ground action as well, the Hamas heads and spokesmen continue calling for rocket fire and attacks on Israeli civilians:

  - Mahmoud al-Zahar praised the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades for “sacrificing themselves for the sake of Allah.” He said that the mission was “to build a world without Zionists, oppression and aggression.” He said that the IDF’s ground attack had given Hamas justification for attacking hospitals, ambulances and synagogues, and to kill both men and women. (Al-Aqsa TV, January 5, 2009).

---

\(^2\) According to Hamas’s PALDF Forum, January 5, Al-Aqsa TV has begin broadcasting via the European communications satellite Eurobird (frequency 11766 and/or 10873/27500 V. An examination proved the truth of the statement. For further information see our January 6, 2009 Bulletin entitled “Hamas’s Al-Aqsa TV broadcasts via a European satellite operated by a corporation whose head offices are in Paris.”
In a written statement issued by Iran’s Fars News Agency, Ismail Haniya said that Israel’s ground incursion would fail exactly as its aerial attack had because of “the determination of the Palestinian people.” He criticized the UN Security Council for supporting Israel (Fars News Agency, January 5, 2009).

Islam Shawan, spokesman for the Hamas administration’s interior ministry, said that policemen in the Gaza Strip were on high alert to protect the “internal front” from the IDF’s action in the Gaza Strip. He said the police on the ground were wearing civilian clothing to prevent IDF forces from identifying them (Radio Sawt al-Aqsa, January 5, 2009).³

Hezbollah

Hezbollah head Hassan Nasrallah continues encouraging the Palestinians with daily speeches, while avoiding any commitment to help. On January 5 he made no reference to the IDF ground operation, but did appeal to the Arab world to pray for the victory of the “resistance” in Gaza. Sheikh Nabil Qaouk, Hezbollah figure responsible for the south Lebanon sector, said that in view of information regarding concentrations of Israeli forces in the north, Hezbollah forces in south Lebanon were “careful and alert” (Lebanese News Agency, January 5, 2009). In Lebanon, protest and solidarity rallies with the residents of the Gaza Strip continue.

Iran

Iranian parliament chairman Larijani claimed that the Israelis were behaving “worse than the Nazis,” and that although Israel had started the ground operation in the Gaza Strip, it could not determine how it would end (Mehr News Agency, January 5, 2009).

Iranian foreign minister Mottaki criticized the Arab countries and the UN Security Council for their silence. He said that the fact that they did not take serious steps had made it possible for Israel to enter the Gaza Strip (Press TV, January 4, 2009).

Western Reactions

The United States

American President George Bush said he understood Israel’s desire to defend itself and that Hamas had caused the situation in the Gaza Strip. He added that instead of taking care of the Gazans, Hamas had chosen to use the Gaza Strip to fire rockets into Israel. He also

³ Terrorist operatives often fight in civilian clothing instead of uniforms to be able to blend in better with the local population and to make it difficult for IDF soldiers to fight, even if by doing so the terrorists cause real civilians to be harmed.
said that he wanted a ceasefire, but not at the cost of an agreement which would not prevent a return of the current crisis. The international community, he said, had to deal with Hamas, and that any future ceasefire would require an assurance that Hamas would not use the Gaza Strip as a launching pad for rockets against Israel (CNN, January 5, 2009).

Referring to the fighting in the Gaza Strip for the first time, American president-elect Barack Obama said he was “deeply worried” by the situation, but noted that there was a president in office and therefore he would not interfere in “sensitive” deliberations of the Bush administration. However, he also noted that he was being updated on the situation daily and was in contact with the heads of the current administration regarding the issue (Ynet, January 5, 2009).

A spokesman for the American State Department said that the United States, in cooperation with European countries, was trying to put together a three-stage mechanism for ending the fighting: ending the fire against Israel, opening the crossings and stopping the smuggling. A White House spokesman said that Israel had to ensure that the number of civilian casualties was minimal (AP, January 5, 2009).

### Europe

European statesmen are actively working to end the fighting as soon as possible:

- French president Nicholas Sarkozy visited Egypt, Israel and the Palestinian Authority. He called for an immediate ceasefire and an end to the fighting in Gaza. He said that Hamas had been irresponsible and could not be forgiven, and that it was guilty of the suffering of the Palestinians. In addition, he called for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. He also said that moderate Arab regimes, especially Egypt, had to be strengthened.

- The Czech foreign minister, representing the Presidency of the European Union, said that a ceasefire had to be reached as soon as possible, even before Israel had completed its military objectives. He said no logical negotiations could be held between Israel and the Palestinians while the fighting was still going on (CNN, January 5, 2009). He also stated that the EU had a plan to stop the fighting, but first it had to consult with the sides involved, both directly and indirectly (Agence France Presse, January 5, 2009).
Operation Cast Lead

Update No. 9

A pause in the fighting for a “humanitarian corridor.” A Palestinian carrying a sack of flour from an UNRWA warehouse (Muhammad Salem for Reuters, January 7, 2009).

IDF soldiers resting on the outskirts of the Gaza Strip (Photograph by Yossi Aloni, printed courtesy of NRG, January 7, 2009).
**IDF Activities in the Past 24 Hours**

**Ground activities**

- On January 6 the ground operation in the Gaza Strip continued for the third day with increased friction between the IDF and terrorist operatives. Hamas still avoids extensive direct confrontation with the IDF, employing tactics such as dispatching suicide bombers, firing mortar shells, using snipers and detonating IEDs (IDF Spokesman, January 7, 2009).

- Operatives belonging to Hamas and the other terrorist organizations gather in populated centers to draw the IDF forces into the heart of densely built-up areas and to wage the main battle from there. A prominent incident was the unintentional killing of about 40 civilians in an UNRWA school in Jabaliya, when mortar shells were fired at IDF forces from nearby (See Appendix I).

- The main events of the past 24 hours were the following:

  - **An IDF soldier was killed in an encounter with a terrorist squad:** During a joint infantry and combat engineering corps search operation in northern Gaza City terrorists opened fire, killing Staff Sergeant Alexander Mashavisky, a combat engineering fighter, 21, from Beersheba. Four soldiers were slightly wounded. The force returned fire, killing the terrorists.

  - **A suicide bomber was killed:** A paratrooper force operating in the northern Gaza Strip shot at an advancing suicide bomber wearing an explosive belt. The IDF fire detonated the belt, causing an explosion which slightly injured one soldier. Using male and female suicide bombers to attack Israeli soldiers is part of Hamas’s battle tactics.

  ![Staff Sergeant Alexander Mashavisky (IDF Spokesman)](image-url)
- **Tunnels for abducting soldiers were exposed**: A paratrooper force prevented an attempt to *abduct soldiers* in the Atatra area of the northern Gaza Strip. The force identified a trap disguised as a mannequin.

- **Weapons were exposed**: The IDF forces uncovered many weapons stores in the northern Gaza Strip, including rockets ready for firing and wreath arrangements of IEDs ready for use, which were detonated by explosives experts.

**Air Force activities**

- The Israeli Air Force continued attacking targets in the Gaza Strip. Among those attacked during the past 24 hours were eight tunnels used to smuggle weapons, more than ten concentrations of armed terrorists, about 16 locations for manufacturing and storing weapons and five rocket launching areas. Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead the IDF has attacked about 1,300 targets in the Gaza Strip in about 1,500 airplane and combat helicopter sorties.

**IDF casualties in the ground operation**

- During the past 24 hours one IDF soldier was killed and four were slightly wounded in a ground operation in the northern Gaza Strip. Since the beginning of the ground action *six Israeli officers and soldiers have been killed* and dozens wounded, some of them seriously. Hamas continues to *boast of actions it never carried out* and to *lie* about the number of IDF soldiers killed.¹

**Palestinian casualties in the ground operations**

- Since the beginning of the ground operations, according to primary assessments of IDF commanders in the field, the IDF has killed more than *170* terrorist operatives. More than *135* suspected terrorists have been detained and taken for interrogation (IDF Spokesman, January 7). In addition, scores of civilians have been killed in densely populated residential areas from which Hamas and the other terrorist organizations attack the IDF.

---

¹ For example, on Jan 6 Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades spokesman Abu Obeida told Al-Jazeera TV that the number of deaths of IDF soldiers was estimated at “several dozen.”
Extensive daily rocket and mortar shell fire into Israel remains constant. During the past 24 hours **22 rockets** landed in Israel, **five** of them 122mm Grad rockets. **Six** mortar shells landed as well. Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead, **372 rocket and 135 mortar shells** have hit Israeli territory. Mortar shells were also fired at the IDF forces operating in the Gaza Strip.

On January 6 a 122mm Grad rocket fell in the city of **Gadera**, 40 kilometers (almost 25 miles) from the Gaza Strip, exploding close to a residential dwelling. A three-month old baby girl was slightly wounded, and several people went into shock. Rockets also fell in open areas around the cities of Beersheba, Sderot and several towns and villages in the Negev, sending a number of people into shock.
On January 7 Israel instituted a three-hour lull in the fighting to operate a humanitarian corridor for deliveries to the Gaza Strip. Between 1300 and 1600 hours IDF forces engaged in defensive actions only, and air and naval strikes were suspended. The lull made it possible to deliver humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip (an almost daily occurrence since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead) and to enable civilians to stock up on food and other basic necessities.

Seventy-eight trucks carrying humanitarian aid passed through the Kerem Shalom crossing and 400,000 liters (almost 106,000 gallons) of fuel were delivered through the Nahal Oz crossing. The lull was coordinated with the relief agencies operating in the Gaza Strip and commercial elements in the Strip were notified. Civilians could be seen leaving their houses to stock up. The opening of the humanitarian corridor may be repeated, depending on security assessments and the situation on the ground.

Hamas Attempts to Disrupt the Humanitarian Corridor

Hamas, which wants to market Gaza’s humanitarian problems to the world, tried to disrupt the temporary lull. Its operatives told the Gazans that it was an Israeli “plot” and warned them not to go outside because Israelis would shoot and kill them. When they did
leave their houses to stock up on necessities, Hamas spread false reports of Israeli gunfire and Palestinian casualties. At the same time, **Hamas did not respect the ceasefire** and continued attacking IDF forces throughout the lull. In one instance, during the hiatus, a rocket was even fired at Ashqelon.

- The Hamas media completely ignored the lull. Hamas spokesman **Fawzi Barhoum** said that it was an Israeli attempt to whitewash its crime against the Gazans and to improve its image (Al-Jazeera TV, January 7).

**Total of supplies delivered to the Gaza Strip**

- Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead, **586 trucks** carrying humanitarian aid have entered the Gaza Strip. On January 6, **57** trucks passed through the Kerem Shalom and Nahal Oz crossings. On January 7, **78** trucks passed through. On January 6 diesel fuel was delivered for the Gaza City power station.

**Humanitarian aid delivered through the Rafah crossing**

- On January 6 the Rafah crossing remained open for the passage of wounded Palestinians into Egypt and the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip. Ten tons of medicine and medical equipment from Turkey, the Red Crescent and an Egypt NGO were delivered. Other humanitarian aid included:
  - **Iraq**: The Iraqi government sent two planes of medical equipment and drugs via Jordan.
  - **Jordan**: Jordan continued its daily convoy of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip.
  - **Saudi Arabia**: Saudi Arabia received a third group of wounded Palestinians from the Gaza Strip. In addition, the directorate of the Al-Aqsa and Al-Quds funds of the Islamic Development Bank announced they were launching an emergency program of $25 million in support of the residents of the Gaza Strip.

- Concurrently, Egyptian security operations continue along the Egyptian-Gazan border. On January 6 NBC reported that American Engineer Corps officers were aiding the Egyptian
security forces to prevent weapons from being smuggled into the Gaza Strip through the tunnels.

The humanitarian difficulties in the Gaza Strip worsen

- In the past few days the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip has worsened as a result of the fighting waged by Hamas and the other terrorist organizations in densely-populated areas and of the dysfunction of the Hamas administration, which has gone underground and proved itself incapable of providing solutions for the difficulties facing the Gazans. However, the worsening situation serves Hamas’s propaganda machine, which holds the civilians captive and regards their suffering as a means of exerting pressure on Israel.

- Some of the problems the Gazans have to cope with are the following:
  - **Health:** Medicines and medical supplies enter the Gaza Strip on a regular basis, but there is a shortage of sophisticated equipment, such as the type necessary for operating rooms and advanced procedures. The health system is overburdened by the many wounded, and the medical teams face mobility problems. The UN coordinator for humanitarian issues in the Gaza Strip reported that ambulances and doctors find it difficult to reach the wounded. He added that UNRWA and Israel were cooperating closely, saying they needed “a humanitarian breathing space” (UN website, January 6, 2009).
  - **Electricity:** Interruptions have been experienced in sending electricity from Israel to the Gaza Strip. The power plant in Gaza has been inactive since December 30, 2008. There is also a shortage of diesel fuel for civilian generators, although it has been delivered to the relief agencies.
  - **Water:** The lack of electricity disrupts the water supply and the operation of the sewage system. IDF attacks have damaged pipelines, and UNRWA reported that about 60,000 Gazans do not have access to clean water.
  - **Fuel:** On January 6, 120 tons of cooking gas were delivered through the Nahal Oz terminal. However, bakeries (whose ovens use gas) are reportedly closing and civilians’ personal canisters are reportedly empty.
  - **Food supplies:** Food supplies continue to enter the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom and Rafah crossings, but there are difficulties in bringing them to distribution points and delivering them to the Gazans. Reports continue that Hamas commandeers the humanitarian aid for its own purposes, even selling it.
Contacts to Stop the Fighting

**Egypt-Hamas**

- Omar Suleiman, head of Egyptian general intelligence, and his aides held talks with the Hamas delegation to Cairo. The Egyptians updated the Palestinians on the results of their contacts with the international community and called on Hamas to be quick about agreeing to a ceasefire (Middle East News Agency, Palestinian News Network website, January 6, 2009).

- “A reliable Egyptian source” told an Al-Hayat correspondent that Omar Suleiman asked Hamas to lower its demands and not hold out for what it couldn’t achieve “before it is too late.” The source added that Egypt had presented the Hamas delegation with demands for a ceasefire, an unconditional lull in the fighting and the establishment of a national unity government. He said that “Israel will never withdraw its forces unless there is a comprehensive agreement which will ensure its security and an end to the rocket fire.” He noted that Muhammad Nasr and Imad al-Alami, two members of the Hamas delegation, promised to transmit the Egyptian proposals to Hamas’s political bureau in Damascus for review (Al-Hayat, January 7, 2009).

- Hamas spokesmen Musa Abu Marzuq and Muhammad Nasr (who had participated in the talks with Omar Suleiman) publicly stated Hamas’s **intransigent position**: an immediate end to the IDF action in the Gaza Strip, the withdrawal of the Israeli forces and the full opening of the Gaza Strip crossings. They did not relate to the Israeli and international demands regarding the weapons smuggling and a mechanism for implementing the arrangement. At to the Rafah crossing, Muhammad Nasr said that Hamas opposed the 2005 crossings agreement demanded by Egypt because it gave Israel full sovereignty over the crossing. However, he said, deliberations concerning its operation would continue (Musa Abu Marzuq to BBC Arabic radio, telephone interview of Muhammad Nasr to the Algerian daily Al-Shuruq Al-Yawmi, January 6, 2009).

**The Egyptian initiative to stop the fighting**

- Egyptian president **Hosni Mubarak** held a joint press conference with French president **Nicholas Sarkozy**, at which he presented the **Egyptian initiative** to stop the fighting, based on the following points (Middle East News Agency, January 6, 2009):
  - Israel and the Palestinian organizations would agree to an **immediate ceasefire** for a limited length of time, which would enable a secure opening of the crossings for the delivery of aid to the Gazans. The temporary ceasefire would make it possible for Egypt to continue its efforts to reach an overall ceasefire.
• Egypt called on Israel and the Palestinians to determine arrangements and guarantees which end the current escalation and ensure that it would not recur. The arrangements would make it possible to deal with the issues behind the escalation, such as securing the borders (i.e., the problem of weapons smuggling into the Gaza Strip) and lifting the blockade.

• Egypt was willing to participate in deliberations concerning the arrangements with both the Israelis and the Palestinians, as well as with the European Union and the International Quartet.

On January 7, the 12th day of the war, the Israeli cabinet met for an update and to discuss Israel’s military and political alternatives (extending the ground operation or adopting initiatives for a political agreement). At the end of the meeting the prime minister’s office stated that “Israel is working to improve the security reality in the south of the country. Israel thanks Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak and French president Nicholas Sarkozy for their efforts to advance a solution for halting terrorist actions from Gaza and smuggling war material from Egypt into the Gaza Strip. Israel views as positive the dialogue between Egyptian and Israeli officials in order to advance these issues” (The Israeli Foreign Ministry, announcement from the Prime Minister’s Office, January 7, 2009).

International reactions to proposals for a ceasefire

The following were the reactions from the international community:

• Quartet envoy Tony Blair said an immediate ceasefire was necessary, and for that to happen, there had to be a fast, determined action to stop the smuggling of weapons and money to the Gaza Strip (Reuters, January 6, 2009).

• On January 7, the French foreign minister spoke before the Security Council and called for an end to the rocket fire, an end to the Israeli military action in the Gaza Strip, an immediate “humanitarian lull,” the opening of the crossings, and end to the weapons smuggling and the positioning of an international mechanism in the Gaza Strip. Claude Guéant, Elysée secretary general, when asked about a possible dialogue with Hamas, answered that “Hamas is currently on the list of terrorist organizations and the idea of holding direct talks with it is unimaginable” (Italian news agency AKI, January 6, 2009).

• American State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said that Hamas was responsible for the escalation and therefore it would have to stop its
rocket fire. A ceasefire, he said, would have to be stable and capable of being upheld, and would have to include an end to the fire, the opening of the crossings and dealing with the issue of the tunnels, through which Hamas smuggled weapons into the Gaza Strip (Reuters, The American State Department website, January 6, 2009).

**Reactions**

**Iran**

- Iranian Leader Ali Khamenei condemned the events in the Gaza Strip and asked the Islamic Committee to form a united front against Israel. He said that Israel had to be punished for its actions in the Gaza Strip. He also criticized what he called “the double standard” of Bush and the European governments toward the residents of the Gaza Strip (Iran’s Fars News Agency, January 6, 2009).

**Hezbollah**

- Hezbollah secretary-general Hassan Nasrallah told Hamas to learn from Hezbollah’s experience and not surrender to Israel. He said that only the Hamas leadership in the Gaza Strip had the right to determine what the ceasefire would entail (Al-Manar TV, January 6, 2009). He also warned Israel against “aggression” against Lebanon, and continued with vicious propaganda against Egypt (Al-Jazeera TV, January 7, 2009).

**The global jihad**

- In an audio message issued on the Internet, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Osama bin Laden’s deputy, encouraged the Muslims in Gaza. He called the Egyptian president a “traitor” and called on the Muslims in Egypt to continue demonstrating to support their “brothers in Gaza.” He called on all Muslims around the world to wage a jihad and threatened to avenge the blood of every Palestinian killed (Al-Faluja forum, January 6, 2009).

**Syria**

- Syrian president Bashar Assad told a joint press conference held with French president Nicholas Sarkozy that Israel had carried out “extensive slaughter” in the Gaza Strip and that first of all Israel had to stop its actions and withdraw. He said that what was happening in the Gaza Strip was “a war crime,” adding that the Israelis had not learned the lessons of Lebanon and that the “resistance” [i.e., the terrorist organizations] could not be dismantled (Syrian News Agency, January 6, 2009).
Egypt: hate campaign against Israel and the Jewish people

On January 6 anti-Israeli demonstrations and rallies were held throughout Egypt, organized by most of the movements and political parties and attended by thousands. The main protest rally was held in Alexandria with 25,000 participants.

The Egyptian press, including the establishment papers, continue vicious attacks against Israel, using terms which include “holocaust,” “collective annihilation,” and “organized annihilation.” For the first time, on January 6 the establishment daily *Al-Masai* printed anti-Semitic articles. One of them claimed that the “organized annihilation” currently being carried out in the Gaza Strip was “an integral part of the Biblical plan which aspires to racial destruction which would enable only the Jewish race to remain on the land of Palestine.” Another article claimed that “Palestinian blood is the blood of non-Jews, and spilling it is permitted by Zionist belief.” At the same time, the media attack the “poisonous hate campaign” being waged against Egypt and harshly criticize Iran, Syria and Hassan Nasrallah, who “trades in the blood the fallen in Gaza.”

Jordan

King Abdallah of Jordan met with radical Islamist Yussuf al-Qardawi, chairman of the Internal Union for Muslim Scholars. After the meeting he expressed hope that within a few days the Arab countries would manage to put an end to the Israeli action (Al-Jazeera TV, January 6, 2009). The king noted that Jordan was investing all its efforts and resources to bring about an end to the IDF’s action and to provide a solution to the humanitarian crisis of the Palestinian people (Jordanian News Agency, January 6, 2009).

The United States

In the daily White House news briefing, a spokesman said that a ceasefire was necessary, but that nevertheless the United States was not interested in a return to the status quo ante where Hamas was capable of attacking Israel with rockets. She also vigorously objected to the claim that the Israeli reaction had been “disproportionate,” saying that the United States as well would not stand aside if missiles were being fired at it. She added that the United States was aware that Hamas had mixed in with and was operating from within the civilian population (White House website, January 6, 2009).
The ground incursion of the IDF forces into the Gaza Strip clearly illustrated the extensive use Hamas makes of the civilian population as human shields as part of its defensive and offensive fighting strategy. IDF forces operating in the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian media have reported a number updated examples.

Rocket and mortar shell fire from within densely built-up civilian areas is the usual operational pattern of Hamas and the other terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip. Terrorist operatives situate themselves in close proximity to residential dwelling to camouflage their rocket squads and protect them from IDF preventive actions. The strategy is a war crime.

On January 6, 40 civilian in a UNRWA school in Jabaliya were accidentally killed by IDF fire. A preliminary investigation of the IDF forces operating in the area showed that mortar shells were apparently fired at the soldiers from within the school building. The IDF responded with mortar shell fire. Among those killed were Imad Abu Iskar and Hassan Abu Iskar, both well-known Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operatives (IDF Spokesman, January 6, 2009).

Two Palestinians who live near the school said that a group of armed men fired mortar shells from a street close to the school, afterwards fleeing the scene and mingling with the crowd on the street. Only later did the IDF respond with fire. The two refused to be identified out of fear for their lives (AP, January 6, 2009).

Mortar Shell Fire at IDF Forces from the Jabaliya Refugee Camp

A video made by the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades broadcast on Hamas’s Al-Aqsa TV on January 6, 2009. It shows a squad of 2-3 rocket launching terrorists dressed in civilian clothing firing 120mm mortar shells [according to our information, made in Iran]. According to the sound track, the squad is operating in the Jabaliya refugee camp [the same day the incident occurred at the UNRWA school]. The squad was photographed firing mortar shells from the middle of a main street and near residential buildings. The narrator says that they are firing at the [Israeli] enemy attacking Jabal al-Kashif (an area to the north of and dominating the Jabaliya refugee camp).

Click for video

Hamas Forces Civilians to Stay at Home

- Sources in the Gaza Strip reported that despite IDF warnings to the civilian population, Hamas operatives force the Palestinians living in the northern Gaza Strip to stay at home and prevent them from escaping south, away from the fighting. Moreover, Hamas operatives also tried to collect the warning notices dropped by the Israeli Air Force to prevent the Palestinians from leaving their homes (See Appendix B for an example of the flyers). Hamas’s assumption is that civilian presence will limit IDF activity. At the same time, civilian residences serve the terrorist operatives as shelters and weapons storehouses.

Terrorists Fight in Civilian Clothing

- Hamas and other terrorist organization operatives customarily wear civilian clothing during battle to be able to blend into the civilian population and make it difficult for the IDF to operate, despite the high price to the civilians. Evidence can be found in the video of Hamas operatives firing from the Jabaliya refugee camp on January 6.
The above was verified by Islam Shawan, Hamas administration spokesman, who said that Hamas police in the Gaza Strip were on high alert to protect the “internal front” from the IDF. He said the police in the field wore civilian clothing to make it impossible for the IDF forces to identify them (Radio Sawt al-Aqsa, January 5, 2009).

Islam Shawan (Filastin al-‘An website, August 2, 2008).

**Storing Weapons in Civilian Residences**

Civilian residences serve as storehouses for weapons. During IDF attacks secondary explosions were readily discernible in many locations, the result of weapons and ammunition stored there. Thus the terrorist organizations expose the civilian population to danger, despite the efforts made by the IDF to prevent civilian casualties.
To deal with Hamas’s strategy of using civilians as human shields, during Operation Cast Lead the IDF sent a series of announcements and warnings to the Palestinian population in the Gaza Strip. They were meant to limit civilian casualties insofar as possible and avoid harming those not involved in terrorism and fighting. The announcements informed the Gazans of attacks the IDF intended to carry out and instructed them to evacuate areas where there were terrorist operatives or facilities belonging to the terrorist infrastructure.

The IDF used various methods to make sure the warnings reached the civilians, and Gazans were instructed to obey IDF warnings and to avoid friction with the terrorist organizations in the following ways:

- Almost a million flyers were dropped from airplanes in a series of overflights in various regions of the Gaza Strip.
- Over 150,000 attempts were made to warn civilians by telephone (tens of thousands of Gazans responded).
- Local Hamas and other terrorist organization radio and television stations were entered and used to transmit announcements.
To the residents of the Gaza Strip:
The IDF is going to operate against the movements and organizations which carry out terrorist attacks against the residents of the State of Israel.
The IDF will strike and destroy any structure or site where ammunition and weapons are located.
As of this announcement, the life of anyone whose house contains ammunition and weapons is in danger and he is to leave to protect his own life and those of his family. You have been warned!

Translation of telephone announcement
To the residents of the Gaza Strip:
Military announcement
The IDF is operating against the movements and organizations which carry out terrorist attacks against the residents of the State of Israel.
The IDF will strike and destroy any structure or site where ammunition and weapons are located.
As of this announcement, the life of anyone whose house contains ammunition and weapons is in danger and he is to leave to protect his own life and those of his family.
You have been warned!

Translation of radio announcement
Military announcement
The IDF is operating against the movements and organizations which carry out terrorist attacks against the residents of the State of Israel.
The IDF will strike and destroy any structure or site where ammunition and weapons are located.
As of this announcement, the life of anyone whose house contains ammunition and weapons is in danger and he is to leave to protect his own life and those of his family.
You have been warned!
Operation Cast Lead- Update No. 10

IDF soldiers searching for tunnels and weapons caches (IDF Spokesman, January 8, 2009).

Tunnel for abducting soldiers, exposed by IDF forces operating in the Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, January 8, 2009).
I DF Activities in the Past 24 Hours

Ground activities

- Hamas terrorist operatives continue to avoid direct contact with IDF soldiers, preferring tactics such as sniper fire, RPG fire, mortar shell fire and IEDs. They wage their fighting from strongholds within the civilian population, exposing it to danger of attack.

- The IDF continues gradual, moderated attacks against the terrorist infrastructure in the areas in which it operates: the exposure of weapons caches, the exposure of tunnels inside houses, the discovery of IEDs, attacks on fortifications and the detention of terrorist operatives. All of the above are backed up by the Israeli Air Force, artillery and the Navy in a joint effort (attacks on armed terrorists near IDF forces, on rocket launching areas, etc).

- Two events which occurred on January 8 were the following:
  - An anti-tank missile was fired at an IDF force conducting a search in the central Gaza Strip, killing company commander Roee Rosner; another soldier sustained minor injuries.
  - IDF forces operating in the northern Gaza Strip killed three Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorist operatives who had fired rockets into Israeli territory both during the lull arrangement and in the past few days. The houses of senior PIJ terrorists were also attacked (IDF Spokesman, January 8).

Exposing IEDs

In the past few days the IDF uncovered scores of IEDs, including booby-trapped mannequins. Left to right: A large booby-trapped mannequin, a camouflaged IED, and a detonator (IDF Spokesman, January 7, 2009).
**Israeli Air Force attacks continue**

- The IAF continues attacking targets and providing support for the ground forces. During the past 24 hours it attacked **at least 80 targets**, including a mosque which served as a weapons storehouse and a meeting place for Hamas terrorist operatives, a Hamas police post and more than 15 tunnels (some of the tunnels were in the Rafah area along the Egyptian border, while others were inside the Gaza Strip and were used by Hamas terrorist operatives in their attacks against IDF forces). More than 15 weapons stores were attacked, some of them in the houses of Hamas operatives. Other targets were at least 15 rocket launching points and bunkers from which IDF soldiers were attacked, a vehicle carrying a rocket launcher, two Hamas posts and five armed squads, some of which had fired at IDF forces.

**Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire into Israeli Territory**

- During the past few days there has been **a gradual, marginal decrease in the scope of rocket and mortar shell fire**. On January 7, 17 rockets and five mortar shells were fired into Israeli territory. Since Operation Cast Lead began, **389 rocket and 140 mortar shells have been fired**. Some of the more prominent events of the past 24 hours were the following:
  - **January 7**: A Grad rocket fell in the yard of a house in the city of Ashqelon. One man sustained minor injuries and eight went into shock. The building and surrounding area were damaged.
  - **January 7**: Less than half an hour after the end of the three-hour lull in the fighting (the humanitarian corridor), two Grad rockets were fired at the city of Beersheba. One fell in an open area in the center of the city and the other in a field beyond the city limits.
  - **January 8**: A rocket barrage was fired at an Israel village in the northwestern Negev. Seven IDF soldiers were wounded, one critically, one seriously, and five sustained minor injuries.
  - **January 8**: A rocket fired at the city of Ashqelon hit the gym of one of the city's schools, which was empty at the time.
On January 8 the IDF forces again stopped their attacks to allow for another three-hour humanitarian aid corridor to be opened for Gazans to stock up on food and other necessities. The lull lasted from 1300 to 1600 hours.

During the day 65 trucks carrying supplies passed into the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom crossing. Tankers with 315,000 liters (more than 83,000 gallons) of fuel, as well as 95 tons of cooking gas were delivered through the Nahal Oz crossing. The Palestinian and Arab media reporting from the Gaza Strip said that there was brisk movement through the streets of Gaza City. The lull was used to evacuate the wounded and to evacuate and bury the dead.
Trucks carrying humanitarian aid and tankers carrying diesel fuel making deliveries to the Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, January 7, 2009).

Responses to Opening the Humanitarian Corridor (January 7)

- Hamas, desiring to represent itself as worried about the residents of the Gaza Strip, said it would stop firing while the humanitarian corridor operated on January 7. **Musa Abu Marzuq**, deputy head of Hamas’s political bureau, said that “Hamas will not even fire a rocket at Israeli targets” (Reuters, January 7). However, in actuality, they did not stop firing and in one instance even launched a rocket at the city of Ashqelon during the humanitarian lull in the fighting.

- The other terrorist organizations operating in the Gaza Strip publicly dissociated themselves from the lull. Popular Resistance Committees spokesman **Abu Mujahed** said that Israel’s real reason for the three-hour lull was “to trap the resistance.” He said that the resistance would continue [carrying out terrorist attacks] as long as Israel was “encamped on Palestinian land” (Ma’an News Agency, January 7, 2009). **Khaled al-Batash**, senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad figure, said that the lull was designed to blur the traces of the “slaughter” at the school in Jabaliya on January 6 (Ma’an News Agency, January 7).

International humanitarian aid continues

- Humanitarian aid came from the following countries:
  - **Iran**: An Iranian relief ship carrying 2000 tons of aid for the Gaza Strip is currently in the Red Sea on its way to the Suez Canal. The situation in the Gaza Strip makes it impossible for the ship to dock there and delivering the aid through Egypt is being examined.
  - **France**: The French foreign ministry announced a donation of 3 million euros to human rights agencies for humanitarian aid to the residents of the Gaza Strip.
  - **Belgium**: Belgium will donate half a million euros for humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip.
• **Libya**: Three trucks carrying humanitarian aid which arrived on a Libyan ship entered the Gaza Strip via the Rafah crossing. Another Libyan vessel docked in El-Arish with a cargo of 4,000 tons of supplies.

• **Syria**: On January 7 a convoy of 15 trucks carrying humanitarian aid left Syria.

• **Saudi Arabia**: Saudi Arabia opened two relief centers in the Gaza Strip, one in Jabaliya and the other in the Shati refugee camp.

The organization calling itself Free Gaza said that it was planning to send a ship which would leave from Cyprus and dock in the Gaza Strip, but “would avoid entering Israel territorial waters.” The date of its sailing will be announced in a few days (Free Gaza website, January 8, 2009).

**Humanitarian Aid through the Rafah Crossing Continues**

- The Rafah crossing remains open for the passage of wounded Palestinians into Egypt and the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip. On January 7, 30 wounded Palestinians and their escorts left for medical treatment in Egypt (Middle East News Agency, January 7).

- Egypt continues its security measures along its border with the Gaza Strip. On January 7, seven Palestinians who had illegally crossed the border were detained (Al-Yawm Al-Sabaa, January 7).

**Contacts to Stop the Fighting**

**The Egyptian Initiative - Update**

- On January 8 Egyptian foreign minister Ahmed Abu al-Gheit told a correspondent from Al-Hayat that the timetable for getting the Egyptian initiative under way was **48 hours, and no more than 72**. He said that Egypt wanted to prompt Israel and the Palestinians organizations to negotiate a simultaneous ceasefire, and that Egypt also wanted to prompt renewed negotiations leading to an internal Palestinian reconciliation.

- Abu al-Gheit also noted the following:
  - The goal of Egypt’s contacts with Israel and the Palestinians is to achieve a **ceasefire** accepted by both sides with a definite timetable and which will lead to an immediate ceasefire, the opening of the crossings and a return to the lull arrangement.
  - Egypt holds **Hamas** responsible for the current escalation: “There is a side that decided not to renew the lull and after that began firing rockets.” Hamas, he said, is
also the side that sabotaged the internal Palestinian dialogue, emphasizing at the same time that Hamas is part of the Palestinian people and the fact that it is leading the military “resistance” against Israel must not be forgotten.

- **Egypt objects to the deployment of international forces on its territory near the border:** “There will be [no forces] on Egyptian soil except armed Egyptian forces...That is completely unacceptable and will not happen - not today and not in another thousand years.”

- The answer to the Israel claims of weapons and explosives arriving in the Gaza Strip is to position monitors. He (untruthfully) claimed that weapons reach the Gaza Strip by sea or from Israel.

According to French foreign minister Bernard Kouchner, Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak invited the Israeli prime minister to Cairo to discuss the issue of the Egyptian-Gaza border (Agence France Presse from the UN, January 7, 2009). On January 8, chief of the Political-Security Bureau of the Israel Ministry of Defense, General (Ret.) Amos Gilad is expected to go to Cairo to discuss the details of the Egypt initiative.

Hamas spokesmen in Beirut and Damascus are suspicious of the Egyptian initiative. **Usama Hamdan**, Hamas representative in Lebanon, said that there were other “ideas and plans,” such as the European suggestions, and that Hamas should not restrict itself to the Egyptian initiative. He added that “a lot of question marks were floating above the [Egyptian] initiative...” (Al-Jazeera TV, January 7, 2009). **Muhammad Nizal**, of Hamas’s political bureau, said Hamas resented the fact that Egypt was not a maximum effort to support the Palestinian people. When asked about the Egyptian initiative, he answered that Hamas had not rejected it but wanted to make it clear to Egypt that it was in favor of an initiative which included three [sic] principles: the end of the Israeli operation, the withdrawal of the IDF from the Gaza Strip, the lifting of the blockade and the opening of the Rafah crossing. He said the Egyptian initiative had to be “corrected and improved” to make it “a positive initiative for Palestinian interests” (Al-Aqsa TV, January 7, 2009).

### Reactions to Operation Cast Lead

**The Palestinian Authority**

- The Palestinian Authority (in complete contrast to Hamas) gave its blessing to the Egyptian initiative. It was reported that on January 9 Mahmoud Abbas would go to Cairo to meet with Hosni Mubarak in order to formulate a plan and mechanism for implementing the initiative (Wafa News Agency, January 7, 2009).
Speaking at the Security Council, Mahmoud Abbas recounted the suffering of the Gazans and the IDF’s “atrocities,” calling for a complete end to “Israeli aggression” (without mentioning the rocket and mortar shell barrages and Hamas’s terrorist attacks). He said that the guarantee for any solution would be the establishment of an international force which would help the Palestinian people rehabilitate its welfare and security, bring an end to the “siege” of the Gaza Strip, and ensure a firm base for a comprehensive and durable ceasefire.

Hamas and the Other Terrorist Organizations Operating in the Gaza Strip

Using Women for Terrorist Purposes

One terrorist organization tactic is using women for offensive purposes against the IDF. On January 8 armed women belonging to the Popular Resistance Committees held a march. The pictures are from Hamas’s PALDF Forum, January 8, 2009).

Children in the Gaza Strip Write Messages on Rockets Fired into Israel

A surfer on the Fatah forum (January 7) said that “the children of Gaza decided to enter the battle against Israel...” He said they would send their messages to the children of Israel by writing them on rockets. He attached pictures (which appeared authentic) of a masked boy and girl writing messages on rockets.
**Hamas Terrorist Operative Interviewed by British Newspaper**

Azmi Kashawi, Times correspondent in Gaza, interviewed a Hamas platoon commander in the middle of the street. The terrorist, nicknamed “Abu Jundal,” was off-duty, unarmed and wearing civilian clothes. He said (January 7, 2009):

- So far, only a small percentage of Hamas capacity (10% of 15,000 operatives) has entered battle.
- Hamas is waging a war of attrition against the IDF and it can last for three more months.
- Hamas operatives fight in shifts that begin at 2200 hours and end at 0500 hours, to save their strength.
- “Abu Jundal’s” platoon has not seen combat with the IDF at close quarters. So far his operatives have fired rocket grenades and mortar shells and detonated land mines to stop the enemy.
- Hamas has prepared a number of “surprises” for the IDF which he refused to discuss. However, he said that the key priority for him and his comrades was to abduct Israeli soldiers to use as bargaining chips.

**Hezbollah**

Hassan Nasrallah addressed the following issues during the past two days (Al-Manar TV, January 7):

- **The visits of Kazem Jalili, spokesman for the Iranian parliament’s foreign committee, to Damascus and Beirut**: Nasrallah attempted to rebuff claims that Hezbollah and the Palestinian terrorist organizations receive instructions from Iran: “Our Iranian brothers do not come here to dictate to us, saying fight or don’t fight, stop and restrain yourselves, which is the impression some people are trying to create.” The Iranians, he said, “come to ask advice, to consult and to ask how they can proffer the necessary help as demanded by their status, responsibility, capability and resources.” Nasrallah “revealed,” with “full responsibility and sincerity,” that “today this resistance, that exists in Lebanon, in Palestine, does not bow before the authority of any country in the world...” (a bald-faced lie from the head of an organization established, operated and financed by Iran).

- **Praise for the firm stance of the Palestinian operatives in the Gaza Strip**: “Yesterday, jihad fighters and men of the resistance [i.e., terrorist operatives] demonstrated in the Gaza Strip, in several locations, a wonderful combat function,
which expresses the will of jihad and the desire to die the death of a martyr [for the sake of Allah...” Nasrallah provided false information about the number of IDF soldiers killed and about the bravery of the Palestinians (his speech was interrupted with cries of “Death to Israel!”).

- **A warning to Israel not to invade Lebanon:** “We are ready for every [act of] aggression. If [Israel] comes to our land, our villages, our people, the Zionists will discover that the second Lebanon war was a picnic compared to what he have prepared for them, for any new aggression...”

**Lebanese Arena**

- On the morning of January 8, four rockets were launched from the western sector of south Lebanon toward the Western Galilee. One hit an old age home in the city of Nahariya, and caused minor injuries to several people. (Further details and assessment will be provided in a separate document.)
The UN Security Council session which passed Resolution 1860 calling for an immediate ceasefire (UN website, January 8, 2009).

...leading to an increase in Hamas rocket fire

The Security Council passes Resolution 1860...

The UN Security Council session which passed Resolution 1860 calling for an immediate ceasefire (UN website, January 8, 2009).
The Situation on the Ground

The first week of the ground operation

- On January 3, IDF infantry, armored, engineering and artillery forces entered the Gaza Strip with backup from the sea and air. Their objectives were to complement the air attacks, damage Hamas and its terrorist infrastructure, take control of rocket and mortar shell launching sites and reduce the number of attacks on Israeli territory.

- The ground phase began with the entrance of forces into the northern and southern Gaza Strip, which was then divided. During the past few days the IDF has advanced its action in the northern Gaza Strip, the region from which most of the rockets are launched into Israel. The IDF simultaneously surrounded Gaza City and continued its counterterrorism activities in the northern and southern Gaza strip. The fighting has been waged from house to house in densely populated areas. IDF forces have had to face challenges which include mined routes, large quantities of IEDs, an extensive network of booby-trapped tunnels, suicide bombers and the extensive use of civilians as human shields.

- The ground operation has attacked various parts of the terrorist infrastructure, including tunnels, weapons stores, rocket and mortar shell launching squads and sites, terrorist operatives and their houses, military bases and facilities, and terrorist bases in mosques and other civilian buildings. The ground action has dealt a severe blow to the Hamas’s front-line defensive positions and led to a retreat of its operatives into built-up areas.

- During the past 24 hours IDF forces went deeper into the Gaza Strip to attack the terrorist infrastructure. The friction between the IDF and the terrorist operatives from all the organizations increased, and about 50 were killed. Pressure on the terrorist organizations was intensified, apparent, among other things, in the decrease in the extent of rocket and mortar shell attacks against Israel (See below).
Important events during the past three days

- The events were the following:

  - **January 8**: Three IDF soldiers were killing in three separate incidents:

    - Tank crew member **Sergeant Amit Robinson**, 20, from Kibbutz Magal, was killed in an exchange of fire with terrorist operatives during a combined infantry, armored forces and engineering action in the northern Gaza Strip.

    - Battalion commander **Major Roe Roee Rosner**, 27, from Holon, was killed by anti-tank fire during a search and discover action in the central Gaza Strip. Another soldier sustained minor injuries.

    - Infantry battalion commander **Captain Omer Rabinovitch**, 23, from Arad, was killed in an exchange of fire with armed terrorist in the northern Gaza Strip. Another soldier sustained minor injuries.

  ![Two of the IDF soldiers killed on January 8. Left: Captain Omer Rabinovitch. Right: Sergeant Amit Robinson (IDF Spokesman, January 8, 2009).](image)

- Other events of **January 8**: The IDF killed Palestinian Islamic Jihad operative **Tariq Abu Amshab**, 22, from Beit Hanoun, who was involved in attacking IDF forces with IEDs and daily rocket fire into Israel. **Muhammad Najar**, 26, from Jabaliya, was also killed. In addition, IDF forces located a weapons laboratory in the northern Gaza Strip containing large amounts of explosives, and two tunnels. The tunnels were blown up in controlled explosions. In another instance, an IDF force uncovered a tunnel with RPGs, detonation mechanisms, Kalashnikov assault rifles, hand grenades and knives.

- **January 9**: During the ground operation IDF forces killed armed terrorists in various incidents. An IDF force located a house booby-trapped with a number of land mines. Another IDF
force was attacked with anti-tank missiles, returned fire and killed the attackers. In another instance, a tank force attacked a structure where terrorist snipers were hiding and from which Sergeant Amit Robinson had been killed on January 8.

- **January 10**: Based on intelligence, IDF forces killed Amir al-Mansi, commander of rocket attacks for Gaza City, and who was acting commander of the Gaza artillery brigade. He was identified by the force while he fired rockets in Jabal Reis. The IDF force opened fire, killing him and wounding two other terrorists. Al-Mansi was an expert in firing long-range Grad rockets and was active in firing rockets into Israel which killed and wounded many Israel civilians.

![Amir al-Mansi](Islamic University website, Gaza).

- **January 10**: On the night of January 10 the Israeli Air Force attacked the house of Ahmed Ja'abari, commander of Hamas's military-terrorist wing in Saja'iya (IDF Spokesman, January 11). The results of the attack are unclear so far.

### Israeli Air Force and Navy attacks continue

- The Israeli Air Force and Navy continued attacks and provided back-up for the ground forces operating in the Gaza Strip. Between January 8 and 10 the Israeli Air Force attacked more than 250 targets, and 20 more on the morning of January 11. Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead the Israeli Air Force has attacked approximately 1,500 targets, including rocket and mortar shell launching sites, mortar shell launchers and the squads operating them, weapons manufacturing sites, tunnels, Hamas's operational network, weapons stores, Hamas posts, headquarters, training camps, armed operatives, senior Hamas figures, etc.

### The Engineering Corps in the Land Phase of Operation Cast Lead

*Information from the IDF Spokesman's website*

- The combat engineering corps is important in ground fighting, including in urban warfare in densely-populated areas. Its fighters provide responses to the many obstacles and threats on the ground, such as booby-trapped buildings, opening routes and dozens of tunnels, and neutralizing IEDs while Hamas tries to attack. A combat engineering officer said that urban warfare conditions
were difficult and complex, and Hamas’s weapons and sophisticated traps also had to be taken into consideration.

- The combat engineering forces reported that they often have to deal with booby-trapped doors and windows, and sometimes entire buildings and their contents have been rigged as bombs. One officer said that “Hamas tries to attack us in every possible way imaginable...In one house they set up a booby-trapped mannequin dressed as a Hamas terrorist...There are also dozens of booby-trapped houses and a large number of booby-trapped schools and mosques.” In one instance a terrorist operative wearing an IDF uniform approached an elite combat engineering unit. The incident resulted in the wounding of an IDF soldier.

- On the 13th day of the fighting, an officer summed up the situation by saying that “so far we have dealt the Hamas infrastructure a serious blow...The combat engineering forces operate intensively and so far they have blown up dozens of buildings, destroyed terrorist networks with explosives and bulldozers, dealt with dozens of tunnels, weapons caches and weapons laboratories.” The officer also said that “the IDF forces are exposed to IEDs ready to be detonated. In one building they found six devices. In such cases, the forces destroy them along with the building.”

**Combat engineer fighter in the field with an armored D9 caterpillar in the background (IDF Spokesman, January 9, 2009).**

**Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire into Israeli Territory**

- Rocket and mortar shell fire continues at the rate of several dozen attacks a day. In general, there is a slow trend toward a decrease in the number of attacks. An exception was January 9, the day after the Security Council passed Resolution 1860, when there was a increase in the amount of rocket fire (See Graph). On January 8, 15 rockets and four mortar shells fell in
Israeli territory. Over the weekend there were **35 rockets and 14 mortar shells**. Some of the rockets were 122mm long-range rockets. In addition, a number of mortar shells were fired at IDF forces operating in the Gaza Strip. Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead **439 rockets and 158 mortar shells** have been fired.

- On January 9, a 122mm Grad rocket hit a house in the city of Ashqelon. Three civilians were wounded, one of them seriously, while the other two sustained minor injuries. The house suffered extensive damage.

![House in Ashqelon suffers a direct hit (Photo: Edi Israel, January 10, 2009).](image)

### Rockets and Mortar Shells Fired at Israel during Operation Cast Lead

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Rockets</th>
<th>Mortar Shells</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Since January 7, the IDF has halted its activities for three hours a day to enable the opening of a humanitarian corridor. The corridor makes it possible for the civilian population to stock up on food and drugs, for the wounded to be evacuated and for the vital aspects of local infrastructure to be repaired. Opening the corridor helps improve the situation of the civilian Gazans, who are paying a high price for the extensive use Hamas makes of them as human shields.

On Friday, January 9, during the pause in the fighting, 41 trucks carrying supplies entered the Gaza Strip. On Saturday, January 10, the crossings remained closed, as they do every Saturday, but there was a pause in the fighting so that civilians could leave their houses to stock up. On Sunday, January 11, the humanitarian corridor was opened between 1100 and 1400 hours and 91 trucks carrying supplies entered the Gaza Strip. On January 8, 250 foreign residents left the Gaza Strip via the Erez crossing.

An improvement is evident on the ground, especially in the supply of food to the population, which can be seen in the streets during the pauses, with the exception of the main battle sites where they are afraid to go outside. In addition, the supply of electricity to the Gaza Strip has improved. As for the medical situation, there is no lack of drugs because they are supplied daily in large quantities, but there is a shortage of trained medical personnel and the hospitals carry a great load.

Despite the fact that Israel enables the continuous delivery of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip, and even halts the fighting for three hours a day for the humanitarian corridor (a ceasefire not fully respected by the terrorist organizations), harsh international criticism continues. On January 8 UNRWA announced it was suspending its activities in the Gaza Strip immediately because they were endangered by the IDF forces. UNRWA claimed that one of its trucks was shot at by IDF forces as it approached the Erez crossing and that the driver was killed. That was in addition, it claimed, to the incident at its school.
In response the IDF said that it was examining the circumstances of the shooting. On January 9, a UN spokesman said that UNRWA activity would be renewed as soon as possible, once Israel guaranteed the protection of UNRWA worker welfare and facilities.

Side-by-side with UNRWA criticism, the World Food Programme praised the humanitarian corridor as the first step in easing the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip (UN website, January 8, 2009).

**The Rafah crossing**

During the past three days the Rafah crossing was open continuously for the delivery of humanitarian aid and the passage of medical teams into the Gaza Strip, and for the exit of wounded Palestinians, except for periods of Israeli Air Force activity. The flow of humanitarian aid has continued into the Gaza Strip, most of it coming from the Arab countries which send it by air to the Sinai, where it is put on trucks for delivery to the Gaza Strip.

**Weekend Closure on Judea and Samaria**

In accordance with an Israeli foreign minister decision, a general closure was imposed on Judea and Samaria beginning at 2359 hours on Thursday, January 8, and lifted at 2359 hours on Friday, January 10. During the closure only Palestinians with humanitarian, medical or exceptional emergencies were permitted to leave. The closure was dependent on authorization from the Coordination and Liaison Authority.

During the past three days there were angry marches and demonstrations in Judea and Samaria: On January 9 marches were held in Hebron, Nablus, Ramallah, Qalqilya and other locations throughout Judea and Samaria, during which demonstrators confronted the Israeli security forces. On the same day, Hamas held a march in Ramallah. The marchers were confronted by the Palestinian Authority security forces, which detained a large number of demonstrators and wounded several others.
The Egyptian Initiative for a Halt to the Fighting - Update

Egypt is currently waiting for the Israeli and Hamas responses to its initiative, and has expressed satisfaction with the support the initiative has received so far. In the assessment of the Egyptian foreign minister, it will go forward in the coming days and it is also possible it will be ratified by a Security Council resolution (Al-Hayat, January 8).

However, while Hamas spokesmen are disinclined to accept the Egyptian initiative (See below), on January 10 Hamas sent a delegation to Cairo for another round of talks with Omar Suleiman, head of Egyptian general intelligence. The delegation included Hamas political bureau’s Imad al-Almi and Muhammad Nasr, who were part of the first delegation, and Hamas activists from the Gaza Strip Jamal Abu Hashem and Ayman Taha, who left the Gaza Strip hiding in an ambulance (Egyptian TV website, according to a Hamas police source, January 9, 2009). Eyewitnesses said they saw two other senior Hamas figures who also rode in an ambulance to protect themselves from an IDF attack (ibid.). According to a January 9 Al-Arabiya TV report, Salah Bardawil, Hamas spokesman in the Palestinian Legislative Council, also joined the delegation.

In the meantime, senior Hamas figures have opposed the Egyptian initiative (as well as Security Council Resolution 1860, see below):

• Khaled Mashal, head of Hamas’s political bureau in Damascus, said that Resolution 1860 was problematic in that it was passed two weeks after the beginning of the war and did not say when the ceasefire would begin. He repeated Hamas's demands for an immediate end to the IDF activity (“the aggression”), an immediate withdrawal of IDF forces from the Gaza Strip and the lifting of the “siege” of the Gaza Strip. He added that
Hamas would not accept a permanent lull in the fighting because it would prevent the “resistance” (i.e. the continuation of Hamas terrorist attacks against Israel), and said that Hamas would not agree to the deployment of international forces because they would protect Israeli security and make it difficult for the “resistance” [to operate]. (Hamas would also not agree to reduce the amounts of its weapons and rejected any discussion about preventing their passage through the tunnels, saying it was “the right of the [Palestinian] people to talk with a rifle which they can use to defend themselves” (Syrian Satellite TV, January 10).

- Musa Abu Marzuq, deputy head of the Hamas political bureau, said that Hamas was “not interested” in Security Council resolutions, but that “the determining factor is what happens on the ground in the Gaza Strip.” He added that no one had consulted Hamas regarding the decision (Resolution 1860), it did not take Hamas’s opinion into consideration and did not relate to the interests of the Palestinian people. He said that “the relevant factors must coordinate and reach conclusions with the factor on the ground [i.e., Hamas],” and that when the time came, Hamas would negotiate with them. He said that the country directly involved in the decision was Israel, which had been (unequivocally) demanded to halt its fire and rejected the decision (Radio Al-Aqsa, January 9, 2009). He told the Jordanian daily newspaper Al-Ghad that there were issues Hamas could not accept, such as “a permanent end to the resistance” [i.e., terrorism], and the deployment of international forces (Al-Ghad, January 10, 2009).

- Other Hamas opinions were the following: Senior Hamas figure Ayman Taha said that Hamas rejected the idea of a “lull for a lull” or an end to the rocket fire because it was like comparing the hangman to the victim (Saudi Arabian daily paper Al-Madinah, January 8, 2009). He also said, however, that the Egyptian initiate had positive aspects which could be relied on and that there were a number of issues that had to be deliberated again (BBC, January 10, 2009). Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said that Security Council Resolution 1860 had nothing to do with Hamas because no one had consulted it, and that the resolution was not in the interests of the Palestinians (Al-Jazeera TV, Agence France Presse, January 9, 2009). Usama Hamdan, Hamas representative in Lebanon, said that Resolution 1860 had been passed without Hamas involvement and therefore did not commit Hamas to anything (Al-Jazeera TV, January 9, 2009).
Other reactions to the Egyptian initiative

Other reactions to the Egyptian initiative were the following:

- **Egyptian foreign minister Ahmed Abu al-Gheit**, in a joint press conference with the German foreign minister on January 10, said that he was of the opinion that additional meetings would be held in Cairo with the Israelis in the near future. He said that the contacts would lead to a ceasefire, but that Israel would not be able to realize its goal of destroying Hamas. He repeated that no international force would be deployed on Egyptian soil but said he did not reject the possibility of enlarging the number of Egyptian security forces along the Egyptian-Gaza border (Middle East News Agency, January 10, 2009).

- After a meeting with Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak, **Palestinian Authority chairman Mahmoud Abbas** told a press conference that “unfortunately,” the Security Council resolution would have “no direct influence.” He said the Egyptian initiative was the way to implement the resolution and that “we can rely on [the Egyptian initiative].” He again demanded the deployment of international forces which would protect the Palestinian people from Israel, both in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. He said he was certain that when the events in the Gaza Strip ended, Hamas would return to the bosom of the Palestinian Authority (Al-Jazeera TV, January 10, 2009).

- On January 8 a signed editorial in the Syrian daily paper Tishrin rejected the Egyptian initiative. “We are not sure the Egyptian initiative in its present form will ensure the withdrawal of the Israeli forces. It also does not ensure the opening of the crossings.” The Egyptian initiative, it said, was nothing more than a humanitarian ceasefire and did not deal with “the factor of Israeli aggression,” did not provide the Palestinians with security, did not return the Israeli army to its previous positions, and did not provide in any way for
On January 9 the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1860, with 14 votes in favor; the United States preferred to abstain rather than exercise its veto. The resolution’s main points were the following:

- The **preamble** emphasizes the importance of the safety and well-being of all civilians and expresses grave concern at the escalation of violence. It does not specifically mention Hamas.

- Regarding the **humanitarian situation**, the resolution expresses “grave concern” at the deepening “humanitarian crisis” in the Gaza Strip. It notes the need ensure a sustained and regular flow of goods through the Gaza Strip crossings. It also recognizes the vital role played by UNRWA in providing humanitarian and economic assistance within Gaza.

- The resolution **condemns all violence** and hostilities directed against civilians and all acts of terrorism. It does not specifically refer to Hamas and the other terrorist operatives.

  - **Operative articles:**

    1) **Ceasefire:** The resolution calls for an immediate, durable and fully respected ceasefire leading to a full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza.

    2) **Distribution of humanitarian assistance in the Gaza Strip:** It calls for the unimpeded provision and distribution throughout Gaza a humanitarian assistance, including food, fuel and medical treatment. It welcomes the initiatives aimed at creating and opening humanitarian corridors and other mechanisms for the sustained delivery of humanitarian aid.

    3) **The opening of the crossing points:** It calls upon Member States to prevent illicit trafficking in arms and ammunition and to ensure the sustained reopening of the crossing points on the basis of the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access between the Palestinian Authority and Israel.

- **The resolution encourages additional initiatives:** It calls upon Member States to intensify efforts of provide arrangements and guarantees in Gaza in order to sustain, a durable ceasefire and calm, and to prevent illicit trafficking in arms and ammunition [the first time the Security Council has related to the issue]. It welcomes the **Egyptian initiative** and other regional and international efforts that are under way.
Hamas and Israeli responses to the resolution

- **In practical terms**, the morning after the resolution was passed Hamas continued and intensified its rocket fire into Israel. In addition, Hamas spokesmen were quick to reject it (See below). Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Popular Resistance Committees spokesmen also expressed their objections to the resolution, making it clear that they would continue their terrorist attacks against Israel. The Popular Resistance Committees announced that the resolution was passed by the Security Council, “an institution which does what the enemies of Allah tell it to...” (PRC-Zakaria Dughmush Network website, January 9). The **terrorist response makes the resolution impractical** and is in direct opposition to the its central operative article, i.e., a durable ceasefire.

- On January 9 the Ministerial Committee for National Security met to discuss the continuation of Operation Cast Lead and UN Security Council Resolution 1860. The committee announced that since the morning hours Israel had been attacked by terrorist organization rocket fire. It also announced that the State of Israel had the right to defend its civilians, and to that end the IDF would continue operating to achieve the stated objectives, that is, to change the security situation in the southern part of the country, and would do so according to the plans authorized for the operation. **Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert** said the following in response to Resolution 1860:

  “The State of Israel has never agreed that any outside body would determine its right to defend the security of its citizens. **The IDF will continue operations** in order to defend Israeli citizens and will carry out the missions with which it has been assigned in the operation. This morning’s rocket fire against residents of the south only proves that UN Security Council Resolution 1860 is not practical and will not be honored in actual fact by the Palestinian murder organizations.”

Mahmoud Abbas’s continues as Palestinian Authority chairman

- On January 9, 2009, **Mahmoud Abbas’s** term of office as chairman of the Palestinian Authority ended. On January 10, **Rafiq al-Husseini**, Palestinian presidential office chief of staff, held a press conference at the Muqataa in Ramallah, where he announced that Mahmoud Abbas would remain the Palestinian Authority president until elections were held for both the presidency and the Palestinian Legislative Council. He added that anyone who had a complaint could appeal to the Palestinian supreme court, and that it was not the right time to talk about the issue (Ma’an News Agency, January 10, 2009).
Musa Abu Marzuq, deputy head of Hamas's political bureau, said that Mahmoud Abbas was no longer entitled to the authority previously granted him by Palestinian law because his term of office was over. However, he added that it was “of secondary consideration” and that the main issue was now the events in the Gaza Strip (Al-Aqsa Radio, January 9, 2009). At the end of the news on January 8, Hamas’s Al-Aqsa TV reported that the following day Mahmoud Abbas’s two-year term of office would end. According to the report, Aziz Daouk, chairman of the Palestinian Legislative Council currently imprisoned in Israel, is expected to be appointed president of the Palestinian Authority for an interim period of 60 days (Al-Aqsa TV, January 8).

The Hamas media functioning

During the fighting “The Palestinian Information Center” (Palestine-info website) launched a new website called Paltube. It features Hamas propaganda videos and has live broadcasts from Hamas’s Al-Quds TV. It is apparently another Hamas attempt to operate propaganda video website after the failure of Aqsatube (which imitated YouTube).
Video about a “Shaheed” Who Was Killed during Operation Cast Lead

Video dedicated to an Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades terrorist killed in the fighting.

From the Paltube homepage: A video inciting violence against Israel (top), another devoted to a “shaheed” from the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades who was killed during Operation Cast Lead (bottom). In general, Hamas does not publicize the details of its operatives killed by the IDF.

- Hamas’s newspaper Felesteen is publishing again. It announced that English and Arabic websites had been launched to collect signatures worldwide against the Israel action. He also called for a boycott of Israeli and American products. The site is run by radical Islamic cleric Awad al-Qarni, who issued a *fatwa* on December 28 advocating the worldwide murder of Jews in response to the events in the Gaza Strip.

Awadd al-Qarni, recently advocated killing Jews worldwide in response to the events in the Gaza Strip.

The site’s English language homepage. It notes that the commander is Sheikh Awad al-Qarni, anti-Semitic Saudi Arabian cleric hostile to the West.
Demonstrations continued throughout Iran in support of the residents of the Gaza Strip. The demonstrators included students, male and female school children, and others (ISNA News Agency, January 8, 2009). A delegation headed by the chief of the Bureau for Iranian Interests in Egypt visited the wounded Palestinians who had been hospitalized in Cairo (ISNA News Agency, January 9).

The heads of the Iranian government had the following to say:

- **Leader Ali Khamenei** said that the main objective of Israel's "crimes" in the Gaza Strip was the total destruction of regional "resistance" [i.e., terrorist organizations]. He said that the countries neighboring the Gaza Strip [i.e., Egypt] should give it all possible support.

- **President Ahmadinejad** condemned the Security Council resolution, saying that the structure of the council and its seat had to be changed in view of the fact that its resolutions were "one-sided and inhuman." It had become, he said, a tool in the hands of the United States (Islamic Republic News Agency, January 10, 2009).

- **Iranian defense minister Mustafa Mahmoud Najar** said that Israel was being badly beaten and humiliated worse in the second Lebanon war. He described the war in the Gaza Strip as a war of "pagans against Muslims," and appealed to the Muslim world to wake up and defend the residents of the Gaza Strip (Mehr News Agency, January 10, 2009).
- **Iranian parliament chairman Ali Larijani**, while visiting Damascus, said he had met with Ahmed Jibril, secretary general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, General Headquarters, and that the resistance of the Gazans had neutralized “the conspiracy of the Zionist regime.” He also said that the Palestinians had no choice but the “resistance” [i.e., terrorism]. He added that despite the fact that geographically the Gaza Strip was small, the war would have a great impact on the fate of the region (ISNA News Agency, January 8, 2009).

- Head of Iran's strategic research center **Sayid Hassan Ruhani** said he was sure Gaza would win and Israel would be defeated. He said that what was currently happening in the Gaza Strip would end with damage to Israel because the issue proved more than ever that Israel was a “malignant growth” in the Middle East (ISNA News Agency, January 9, 2009).

**Lebanon**

- Lebanese prime minister **Fuad Siniora** said that Israel was proving every day that it was carrying out acts of terrorism and crimes, as it had in Lebanon in 2006. However, he also said that the past two weeks made it possible to see that as opposed to the Arab world, the Israelis, despite internal differences, were united behind the government (Lebanese News Agency, January 9, 2009).

- Throughout Lebanon demonstrations of solidarity and support for the Gazans continued. At a demonstration marching toward the Egypt embassy in western Beirut, demonstrators carried an effigy of Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak bearing a Star of David. Others carried an effigy of defense minister Ehud Barak with Nazi symbols scrawled on his body, and the demonstration ended with burning the effigies (Lebanese News Agency, January 8, 2009).

**Sudan**

- Tens of thousands of Sudanese held a march to protest the military action in the Gaza Strip. During the march speeches were made and flyers were distributed in support of the Hamas leaders in the Gaza Strip; some of the demonstrators carried dummies of rockets. They also shouted slogans against Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak (AP, January 8, 2009).
Jordan

The Jordan foreign minister told Al-Jazeera TV that he resented the fact that the Arab world and the Security Council “had not fulfilled their responsibility to protect human life in the Gaza Strip.” However, he avoided answering when asked if Jordan would recall its ambassador from Israel.

At the same time, popular public activity continued in Jordan to help the residents of the Gaza Strip (Jordanian News Agency, January 8, 2009):

- Dozens of popular demonstrations were held throughout Jordan. One was held with the participation of 4,000 second and third grade children from 12 schools in Amman. It went to UNICEF headquarters, where the children transmitted a letter for the UN Secretary General, expressing their anger at the harm the Israelis were causing to children and their schools.

- A blood drive was held in the city of Kerak for wounded Palestinians. Jordanians also donated the equivalent of a day’s pay for the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Charitable societies and university institutions collected and denoted money and sent trucks carrying equipment. A plane belonging to the royal Jordanian airline took off for El-Arish with medical equipment donated by airline employees.

After the Friday prayers on January 9, demonstrators left the mosque and marched toward the Israeli embassy in Amman. They were stopped by the Jordan gendarmerie, which surrounded the building (Ammon News Agency, January 9, 2009).

Rocket Fire from Lebanon (update)¹

Following the rocket fire from the western sector of south Lebanon into the Western Galilee, the Lebanese army and UNIFIL forces increased their security measures in south Lebanon, especially in the area of Tyre and Kharfa, from where the rockets had apparently been launched (FTV, January 8, 2009). Following the rocket fire, a UNIFIL-Lebanese army patrol in the vicinity of the villages of Shuba and Kafr Hamam (in the eastern sector of south Lebanon) a cache of 34 old rockets (Lebanese News Agency, January 9, 2009).

The rocket fire led to a wave of reactions:

- **The Lebanese government**: Lebanese prime minister **Fuad Siniora** condemned the rocket fire, saying Lebanon firmly adhered to Security Council Resolution 1701 (Lebanese News Agency, January 9, 2009). A high-ranking source in the Lebanese government said that Lebanon was committed to the ceasefire and it was its intention to discover who was responsible. He also said that it was apparently groups which were “not interested in Lebanese stability.” The Lebanese interior minister rejected the possibility that Hezbollah would relapse into a confrontation with Israel because of the activity in the Gaza Strip. He said that any decision to widen the confrontation would be made by Lebanese government (Lebanese News Agency, January 8). The Lebanese government held an unscheduled meeting, and after it announced the need for a united front to avoid dragging Lebanon into a confrontation with Israel (Al-Nahar, January 9, 2009).

- **Hezbollah**: Elements within the organization were quick to deny a connection to the rocket fire. A senior source said that Hezbollah would make its response known at a time it decided. He said that an announcement from the Lebanese government was sufficient (Al-Nishra, January 8, 2009). A senior Hezbollah figure hinted that the groups which had attacked UNIFIL forces were the same that had launched the rockets. He said that Hezbollah deployment since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead was defensive and not offensive.

- **Hamas**: Rafat Mara, responsible for Hamas propaganda in Lebanon, said that the movement was not behind the rocket fire from Lebanon and that Hamas did not use “Arab territory” but operated only within the boundaries of “Palestine” (Agence France Presse, January 8, 2009).

- **Lebanese civilians**: Many Lebanese surfers visited various Internet forums to express their anger about the rocket fire into northern Israel, and mostly blamed the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine -- General Command.

- **International reactions**: An American State Department spokesman condemned the rocket fire, clearly stating that it was a grave violation of Security Council Resolution 1701. The UN Secretary General condemned the fire and asked both sides to restrain themselves (UN website, January 9, 2009). A spokesman for the French foreign ministry condemned the rocket fire and called on both sides to support the activities of UNIFIL and to make a maximum effort to prevent an increase of violence in the region, including activities which were liable to endanger Lebanon’s stability (French foreign ministry website, January 9, 2009). The French foreign minister said that in his estimation Hezbollah had not fired the
rockets, and that it was apparently an attempt at provocation carried out by extremists (Agence France Presse, January 9, 2009).
Appendix

Hamas Continues Making Massive Use of the Civilian Population as Human Shields and Harming It
(Update, January 10)

Overview

- As the fighting in the Gaza Strip continues, more and more examples make themselves known of the massive use made by Hamas of the tactic of using the civilian population as human shields. The following have been reported by IDF forces fighting in the field, as well as by the Palestinian media.

Hamas sketch of hidden IEDs

- Brigadier General Yuval Halamish, chief intelligence officer, revealed a Hamas sketch seized during IDF activity in the northern Gaza Strip. It shows the deployment of IEDs and Hamas forces in the Al-Atatra neighborhood in northern Gaza City (one of the terrorist organizations’ preferred sites from which to fire rockets into Israel). It notes the exact placing of IEDs and firing posts in a crowded neighborhood in the heart of the civilian population.

Hamas sketch (IDF Spokesman, January 8, 2009).

---

2 For further information see our date Bulletin entitled “Hamas Exploitation of Civilians as Human Shields” at http://www.terrorisminfo.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/hamas_e028.pdf.
According to the sketch, Hamas divided the neighborhood into three fighting zones and marked them in blue, red and green. There are various types of IEDs noted in each area: belly charges, booby-trapped barrels, side bombs, anti-personnel and anti-tank IEDs, all dispersed throughout the neighborhood. The sketch clearly shows that Hamas places IEDs in civilian sites and houses. For example, it shows a gas facility next to which an IED has been placed. It also shows the Al-Tawil mosque, where a sniper post was set up at the entrance. Similar posts can be seen at nearby mosques as well. The entrances to residential buildings which have been booby-trapped are marked on the sketch. Those in Hamas who planned the defense of the neighborhood must have been aware that if the IEDs were detonated to attack IDF forces, the civilian population’s lives would be at risk. Brigadier General Halamish added that Hamas prevented civilians from seeing the warning flyers distributed by the IDF which warn them to evacuate their houses.

Hamas Attempts to Disrupt the Pause Designated for the Humanitarian Corridor

Hamas, which wants to market the humanitarian problem in the Gaza Strip to the world at the expense of the suffering of the civilian population, tries to disrupt the humanitarian corridor. Hamas and other terrorist organization operatives told the Gazans that it was an Israeli “plot” and warned them not to leave their houses because Israelis would shoot and kill them. When the Palestinians did leave their houses to stock up on necessities, Hamas spread false rumors about “Israeli fire” and Palestinians who had “been killed.” At the same time, Hamas does not respect the ceasefire and continues attacking IDF forces during the pauses, more than once firing rockets into Israeli territory.

IEDs Discovered in Civilian Houses

During the ground operation IDF forces uncovered dozens of IEDs and booby traps, including a mannequin which would explode when touched.
Left to right: A large booby-trapped mannequin, a camouflaged IED, and a detonator (IDF Spokesman, January 7, 2009).

**Fire from a School**

- On January 9 the Israeli Air Force attacked a Hamas mortar shell launcher in a school yard which had been used to attack IDF forces during the three-hour humanitarian corridor (IDF Spokesman, January 9, 2009).

**Hamas Commandeers Donations of Flour**

- Reports have been received that Hamas groups have commandeered donations of food which have been delivered to the Gaza Strip during Operation Cast Lead, especially flour, and has been selling them at inflated prices.

- On January 11 surfers on a Hamas forum complained that in Dir al-Balah Hamas groups had commandeered the donations of flour. According to the surfers, Hamas transfers the flour to its own warehouses and parcels it out to the Al-Bana and Al-Salah charitable society, both of which it owns.
Hamas forum: Hamas operatives commandeer flour meant for civilians.

**Hamas Activists Travel to Egypt in Ambulances**

- Two Hamas activists from the Gaza Strip, Jamal Abu Hashem and Ayman Taha, who participated in the talks in Egypt, left the Gaza Strip hiding in an ambulance. Eyewitnesses said they saw two other senior Hamas figures who also rode in an ambulance to protect themselves from an IDF attack (Egyptian TV website, according to a Hamas police source, January 9, 2009).

- It was not the first time Hamas terrorist operatives used civilian ambulances, including those belonging to UNRWA, to transfer armed operatives from the battlefield.3

---

3 For more details about the use terrorists make of ambulances, see our January 6 Bulletin entitled “Hamas Exploitation of Civilians as Human Shields” at [http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdfs/hamas_e028.pdf](http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdfs/hamas_e028.pdf).
Hamas continues making massive use of civilians as human shields. An IDF search near a booby-trapped school (IDF Spokesman, January 11, 2009).

The IDF brings humanitarian aid to a family of 100 members living in the fighting zone in the northern Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, January 12, 2009).
The Situation on the Ground

Overview

- During the current phase of the ground operation, IDF forces reinforced with reserve soldiers (integrated into the operation for the first time) have extended their searches and hit the military-terrorist infrastructure more deeply. Friction between the soldiers and Hamas increased and during the past 24 hours dozens of terrorist operatives were killed by IDF forces. In addition, weapons were seized and IEDs were exposed.

- The trend toward less rocket and mortar shell fire into Israel continues (during the past few days rocket and mortar shell attacks have averaged 20-30 a day). As a result, the Home Front Command authorized the gradual renewal of studies in the schools and kindergartens of some of the population centers in the Negev. At the same time, the deliveries of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip continue and the IDF holds a daily three-hour pause in the fighting for the humanitarian corridor (although it is not fully respected by the Palestinian terrorist organizations).

- Regarding the influence of the fighting on Hamas, at this stage it can be evaluated that Hamas suffered a serious blow but so far it has retained offensive and defensive capabilities. Hamas's upper military echelons, which have gone underground, have managed to keep a reasonable level of command and control over their forces, and direct the fighting from fortified bunkers and tunnels throughout the Gaza Strip. The blows sustained by Hamas's rocket manufacturing, storage and launching branches were heavy, but so far Hamas's rocket firing capabilities have not collapsed (Hamas retains its rocket-firing capabilities into Israel, although at a slightly lower level, as noted above).

The ground fighting

- On January 11 reserve soldiers were introduced into the ground operation in the Gaza Strip. The forces, which had undergone training since the operation began, made it possible for the IDF to broaden its activities and increase the pressure on Hamas. IDF searches uncovered various weapons. In one instance, the forces discovered a school and a nearby kindergarten which had been booby-trapped with IEDs (See the appendix dealing with the use of civilians as human shields).

- During the past 24 hours more than 50 terrorist operatives were hit in the Gaza Strip. The IDF suffered no casualties, although a number of soldiers sustained minor injuries.
**Weapons and Tunnels Revealed by Searches on January 11**

Shawaz EFPs (explosively formed penetrators) found by the IDF in a search during the ground operation (IDF Spokesman, January 11, 2009). The Shawaz (“flame” in Arabic) is a Hamas-made EFP which can penetrate 200mm (8”) of steel. Hamas's weapons manufacturing capabilities are based on technological knowhow from Iran and/ or Hezbollah.

**Israeli Air Force and Navy attacks continue**

- On the morning of January 11 Israeli aircraft attacked a rocket launcher which had been used to fire rockets at the city of Beersheba at the start of the school day. In the afternoon Israeli Air Force planes attacked more than 20 tunnels along the Egyptian-Gaza border which had been used to smuggle weapons into the Gaza Strip. In addition, the Israeli Air Force attacked several dozen targets, including rocket and mortar shell launchers and launch sites, four weapons storehouses, the houses of operatives and two tunnels under their houses, and a number of armed terrorist squads which had fired at the ground forces operating in the Gaza Strip.

- Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead, the Israeli Air Force has carried out 2,000 sorties and attacked 1,400 terrorist targets. The Navy has continued its operations, supporting the ground forces and attacking Hamas targets.
Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire into Israeli Territory

During the past few days between 10 and 20 rockets have been fired into Israeli every day. On January 11, **20 rocket and eight mortar shell hits were identified**. Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead **459 rockets and 166 mortar shells** have hit Israeli territory.

During the morning hours of January 11 the city of **Beersheba** was attacked twice by rocket fire; four civilians were treated for shock. At 1600 hours a 122mm Grad rocket hit the city of **Ashdod**, landing close to a kindergarten which was empty at the time; two civilians were treated for shock. At 2100 hours a barrage of five rockets was fired at the city of Ashqelon; no injuries were reported.

Rockets and Mortar Shells Fired at Israel during Operation Cast Lead

Home front soldiers at the scene of a rocket hit near a kindergarten in Ashdod (Picture courtesy of NRG, by Edi Israel, January 11, 2009).
Humanitarian Aid Delivered to the Gaza Strip

Israel

On January 11, International Red Cross and UNRWA workers met with members of the Coordination and Liaison Authority and of the Ministry of Defense. They agreed on methods of improving cooperation between them and preventing misunderstandings between the various agencies and the IDF. Following the meeting, and meetings with Amos Gilad, who commands the Authority and coordinates activities in the Palestinian Authority-administered territories with the UN agencies and the Red Cross, the humanitarian aid deliveries continued.

Since Operation Cast Lead began, more than 800 trucks carrying humanitarian aid have entered the Gaza Strip. On January 12, as on the four previous days, a humanitarian corridor of three hours was opened, this one lasting from 1000 to 1300 hours, to make it possible for the residents of the Gaza Strip to stock up on food and make repairs to the basic infrastructure. In addition, 100 more trucks of humanitarian supplies and 60 trucks of animal feed are expected to be delivered. Teams foreign medical workers are also expected to pass into the Gaza Strip. IDF forces are working in coordination with the relief agencies to make it possible for civilians in the Gaza Strip to receive humanitarian assistance.

Dozens of trucks carrying food and other humanitarian supplies cross through the Kerem Shalom crossing into the Gaza Strip every day. A video of the trucks can be found at:


In an exceptional case, on January 11 a truck brought food for a family of 100 members living in the northern Gaza Strip. The delivery was arranged because security operations in the area in recent days made it impossible for the family to get food any other way. The truck was unloaded on the Israeli side of the border and the food was delivered by IDF soldiers to a site near the family’s house (IDF Spokesman, January 11, 2009).

International Humanitarian Aid

Deliveries of humanitarian aid from the Arab countries continue. Some of it arrives in Jordan and from there is transported through Israel in trucks and enters the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom crossing. The rest arrives by plane to Sinai or in ships docking in the El-Arish port, and from there to the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing. Aid received during the past 24 hours came from the following countries, among others:

- **Saudi Arabia**: An aide to the Saudi Arabian foreign minister said that **$17 million worth of humanitarian aid** was expected to leave Saudi Arabia for the Gaza Strip on January 12, and that more than 850,000 people were expected to profit from it for the following 30 days (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, January 11, 2009). In addition, a shipment of aid from a humanitarian organization established by Saudi Arabian prince Talal ibn Abd al-Aziz is expected to arrive.

- **Iran**: The Iranian ship which left Iran on the night of January 9 and sailed via the Red Sea passed through the Suez Canal on January 11. A Red Crescent official claimed it would reach “the open sea of occupied Palestine” on January 12. According to the organization, its final destination is the port of Gaza, and its docking will be coordinated with “international groups, including the UN and Red Cross...” (Islamic Republic News Agency, January 11, 2009).

- **Spain**: Spain sent two planes carrying medical equipment and food (Al-Jazeera TV, January 11).

The organization calling itself Free Gaza announced that on January 12 a “protest boat” was expected to leave Larnaka for Gaza. On board would be doctors, journalists, pro-Palestinian activists and members of the European parliament. Its cargo would be medical equipment (Free Gaza website, January 11, 2009).

The Egyptian Initiative to Stop the Fighting

The Hamas delegation which arrived in Cairo for another round of talks about the Egyptian initiative met with two aides of Omar Suleiman, head of Egyptian general intelligence, on January 10 and with Omar Suleiman himself on January 11. **Musheir al-Masri**, secretary of the Hamas faction in the Palestinian Legislative Council, repeated the Hamas position that any initiative had to include “an end to the aggression,” “the lifting of the siege,” and the opening of the crossings, including the Rafah crossing (Al-Jazeera TV, January
Both Hamas and Egyptian participants were careful not to leak the substance of the talks.

**Constructing the Myth of Victory: Hamas Manipulations, Propaganda and Psychological Warfare**

Hamas, inspired by Hezbollah, is waging a propaganda and psychological warfare campaign against Israel. Its objective is to represent itself as successfully fighting Israel to prepare the ground for a myth of victory when the time is ripe:

- Hamas strictly forbids the publication of the names of its terrorist operatives who were killed during the fighting, especially since the ground operation began. A warning against divulging information and pictures of the dead and wounded of Hamas and the other organizations was posted on Hamas’s main surfer forum.¹

1 A Bulletin about Hamas’ deliberate concealment of the names and pictures of its casualties will shortly appear on our website.

*Forbidden pictures...*

Pictures from the beginning of Operation Cast Lead whose publication is currently forbidden by Hamas. Left: Yussuf Judaism Ziyab, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative killed by the IDF. The picture shows him shouldering an Al-Yassin rocket launcher (Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades forum website, January 1, 2009). Right: Alaa Ibrahim at Qatarawi, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative killed during Operation Cast Lead (Hamas’s PALDF Forum, December 30, 2008).
• Hamas boasts of its ability to extend the range of its rockets to Tel Aviv. Al-Aqsa TV showed a video with the names of Israeli cities, towns and villages which had been hit by rocket fire, hinting that the next target would be Tel Aviv. The name Tel Aviv appeared next to a large rifle sight with the subtitle, “All our options are open” (Al-Aqsa TV, January 10, 2009).

• Hamas claims responsibility for attacks it did not carry out. For example, a rocket attack on the Israeli Air Force bases in southern Israel which are 50 kilometers (30 miles) from the Gaza Strip; blowing up a house in Beit Hanoun with eight IDF soldiers inside; and hitting an IDF aircraft over the northern Gaza Strip. Such lies reflect aspirations which Hamas’s military-terrorist wing has so far not achieved.

Hamas spokesman Musheir al-Masri also said that “everything is under control.” The Hamas movement and the Hamas administration, he claimed, were successfully directing the Gaza Strip, and that “matters are stable and the situation is as it should be.” [Note: In reality, the Hamas administration is in hiding and barely functions.] He also boasted that the Hamas leadership on the ground was currently formulating its “announcement of a coming victory over the aggression,” and that Israel had failed to achieve its objectives, whether they were to topple Hamas or stop the rocket fire (Iran’s Fars News Agency, January 11, 2009).

**Hamas Media Functioning**

Hamas’s network of websites continue showing signs of recovery. After having launched Paltube, it launched additional sites: a news site to complement Hamas’s PALDF Forum, for news of the events in the Gaza Strip, and a new version of its site for the Islamic Block, its student wing. On the other hand, the Hamas newspaper Felesteen still experiences difficulties in functioning.

**Iranian Media Manipulation**

The Iranian media follow and report on the events in the Gaza Strip. However, their reports are biased and manipulative. For example, Iran’s Fars News Agency, which is widely quoted outside Iran, reported that the Israeli forces had directly targeted a residential
building in Gaza City. It again reported Hamas rocket fire at the “Zionist settlements,” using the same picture, which was taken in the city of Sderot from two different angles, representing one as an “IDF attack,” and the other as a Hamas attack.

Left: The subtitle reads “Hamas fire hits one of the Zionist settlements.” Right: The subtitle reads “IDF fires at houses in the Gaza Strip” (Iran’s Fars News Agency).

Find the differences...
Appendix

Hamas Makes Massive Use of the Civilian Population as Human Shields, Causing Them Harm (Update, January 11)

Bobby-trapped schools

As Operation Cast Lead continues, additional examples come to light showing how Hamas uses the civilian population in the Gaza Strip as human shields as part of its combat strategy.² A prominent example occurred on January 11 when an IDF force operating in the northern Gaza Strip came upon a school in the Zeitun neighborhood which had been completely booby-trapped. A delayed-action fuse led from the school to a small zoo situated nearby, which still had animals in the cages. The IDF soldiers neutralized the IED. A weapons cache, including rifles and RPG launchers, was found inside the school.

During Israeli Air Force attacks on vehicles carrying terrorist operatives and weapons, the drivers deliberately head for the center of a residential neighborhood to escape. The following video shows a number of instances in which vehicles with armed terrorists on board escaped into crowded residential areas. The pilots who discerned that the terrorists had managed to escape into civilian houses were able to deflect their bombs and they either exploded in the air or in open areas.
Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Israel Intelligence Heritage & Commemoration Center (IICC)

January 13, 2009

Operation Cast Lead Update No. 13

IDF reserve soldiers entering the Gaza Strip battleground (IDF Spokesman, January 12, 2009).

An electronic device confiscated from a convoy of humanitarian aid which passed through the Kerem Shalom crossing on January 12. The electronic devices which were expected to be smuggled into the Gaza Strip also included night vision equipment (Photo: Amir Cohen for Reuters, January 12, 2009).
The Situation on the Ground

Overview

- IDF reserve forces joined the ground forces fighting in the Gaza Strip, making it possible to slowly extend the ground action during the current phase. The IDF continues its gradual, methodical attacks, eroding the terrorist infrastructure and putting more pressure on Hamas. In the activity, many weapons caches have been uncovered, including some hidden in mosques.

- IDF forces have begun finding Hamas positions abandoned by terrorist operatives who went deeper into built-up areas. According to reports from soldiers, during the past 24 hours dozens of terrorists were killed. The Israeli Air Force attacked more than 80 targets, among them tunnels along the Egyptian-Gaza border, weapons manufacturing and storing sites, tunnels, a military-terrorist training base and rocket launchers.

- The trend toward less rocket and mortar shell fire into Israel continues, and averages about 20 a day. During the past 24 hours, 17 rocket and seven mortar shell hits were identified in Israeli territory. Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead 476 rockets and 173 mortar shells have hit Israeli territory.

Report by chief of military intelligence to government meeting

- At the government meeting held on January 11, Amos Yadlin, Chief of Military Intelligence (according to a briefing from Cabinet Secretary Oved Yehezkel), raised the following issues:
  
  - Cracks are showing in Hamas. The positions of the leadership in Damascus remain stubborn, but the leadership in the Gaza Strip understands that a compromise must be made. Hamas, which did not expect Israel's response to its violation of the lull arrangement, is finding it difficult to retain administrative responsibility and is worried by the increasing criticism of the Gazan population of its helplessness and lack of leadership.
  
  - The decrease in rocket and mortar shell attacks is the result of weapons shortages, operational difficulties and the harm done to the senior operatives of the rocket branch. The aerial attacks along the Egyptian-Gaza border have cut off Hamas's weapons lifeline. Its operatives are in hiding deep within civilian areas. On the other hand, the chief of military intelligence made it clear that Hamas is not expected to raise a white flag, and that it is capable of exacting a price from Israel, both with rocket and mortar shell fire and with attacks on IDF forces.
**Ground combat**

- During the past 24 hours ground combat focused primarily on the northern Gaza Strip. IDF forces struck a number of armed terrorists and uncovered large weapons caches, including one in a mosque from which terrorists had fired at Israeli soldiers. In addition, an offensive tunnel was uncovered in the northern Gaza Strip which was intended to be used to attack Israel, as were the many weapons stockpiled close to the security fence between Israel and the Gaza Strip.

- On the night of January 12 an IDF officer was critically wounded, and two other soldiers sustained minor to serious injuries caused by an IED which exploded in a booby-trapped house. The explosion occurred during an IDF search in the northern Gaza Strip. A joint armored-paratrooper forces operating at night began a search of a house which led to the detonation of an IED which wounded the soldiers. A further search revealed other weapons and equipment, including an explosively formed penetrator, a bullet-proof vest and a camera.

- In another incident in the northern Gaza Strip, an IDF soldier was critically wounded and three others sustained minor injuries from friendly fire (the third instance of friendly fire during Operation Cast Lead). Since the beginning of the operation, ten IDF soldiers have been killed (four of them by friendly fire) and about 200 have been wounded, nine of them critically.

- Additional incidents of the past 24 hours:
  - **A mosque used for terrorist purposes:** In the southern Gaza strip IDF infantry forces were fired on from inside a mosque. With Israeli Air Force backup, the soldiers attacked the terrorists. After the attack, a search of the mosque revealed large quantities of weapons, including rockets and mortar shells.

  ![Click for video of the search](image)

  - **Weapons discovered:** In several instances during combat in the outskirts of Gaza City, IDF forces discovered weapons. In one instance, an infantry force identified armed terrorists in the southern part of Gaza City and opened fire. A search carried out afterwards revealed large quantities of weapons, including anti-aircraft missiles, mortar shells and machine guns.

  - **Tunnels exposed:** A paratrooper force exposed a terrorist tunnel near the border security fence in the northern Gaza Strip. Its opening was in a house about 300 meters
from the fence, and it was to be used to enter Israeli territory and carry out a showcase terrorist attack. In another instance, a tunnel was discovered whose entrance was in a house in the northern Gaza Strip; the tunnel was destroyed in a controlled explosion.

- **Encounters with terrorist squads**: An armored force identified a terrorist operator placing an IED to the south of Gaza City and shot him. In another instance, an IDF force identified terrorist operatives placing an IED in the Gaza City zone and attacked with Israeli Air Force backup.

### Israeli Air Force and Navy attacks continue

- During the past 24 hours the Israeli Air Force attacked more than 80 targets, among them 20 tunnels along the Egyptian-Gaza border, rocket and mortar shell launching squads, launchers and launching sites, weapons stores and manufacturing sites in the houses of Hamas operatives, tunnels dug under operatives’ houses, a Hamas training facility and terrorist squads preparing to attack IDF forces. Navy ships continued enforcing the maritime blockade of the Gaza Strip.

### Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire into Israeli Territory

- Rocket fire into Israel remains at a level of about 20 identified hits a day. On January 12, 17 rocket and seven mortar shell hits were identified. Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead 476 rockets and 173 mortar shells have hit Israeli territory.

- Hamas’s long-range rocket fire continues. On the morning of January 12 a rocket hit was located in the city of Kiryat Gat; there were no casualties. Several rockets fell in the city of Ashqelon, one of them a direct hit on a house which caused extensive damage to the top floor; seven people were treated for shock. Four rockets fell in the Beersheba area; there were no casualties and no property damage was reported.

![The rocket which hit Ashqelon and the damage it caused (Edi Israel, January 12, 2009).](image-url)
Rockets and Mortar Shells Fired at Israel during Operation Cast Lead

![Graph showing rockets and mortar shells fired during Operation Cast Lead.]

Humanitarian Aid Delivered to the Gaza Strip

Israel

- On January 12, a humanitarian corridor was opened for the fifth time. It lasted from 1000 hours to 1300 hours, making it possible for the Gaza Strip population to stock up on food and repair the infrastructure. Hamas exploited the pause to continue firing at Israel.

During the three-hour pause a barrage of rockets was fired at the cities of Sderot and Ofakim. Eighty-one trucks of humanitarian aid passed through the Kerem Shalom crossing and 12 through the Karni crossing (for the first time since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead).

- On January 13 the humanitarian corridor was opened between 0900 and 1200 hours, and 109 trucks were expected to enter the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom crossing, as well as four tankers carrying diesel fuel for the Gaza power station. In addition, wounded Palestinians were expected to be transferred by ambulance through the Kerem Shalom crossing for treatment in Egypt. The Karni crossing will remain closed, since on January 12 the IDF discovered a tunnel dug nearby. Another example of the terrorist organization policy of regarding the crossings as preferred attack targets, thus harming the vital interests of the civilian Gazan population.
Hamas and the other terrorist organizations operating in the Gaza Strip attempt to smuggle in equipment, including military equipment, in the trucks which deliver supplies to the Gaza Strip. On January 12 four trucks were held up at the Kerem Shalom crossing which were supposed to bring special equipment to Gaza’s energy authority to be used to maintain the electrical network. The trucks were used to try to smuggle in many electronic appliances, including microwave ovens. Among the materiel were photographic and night vision equipment, apparently intended for terrorist organization use in the Gaza Strip. Nevertheless, Israel authorized the passage of one truck which carried equipment to repair the electrical network.

Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead, more than 900 trucks carrying food, medical equipment and drugs have been delivered to the Gaza Strip, as part of the continuous humanitarian aid made possible by Israel. In addition, more than one million liters of fuel have passed through the Nahal Oz crossing to enable the power station, hospitals and wells in the Gaza Strip to continue functioning. Most of the power lines from Israel to the Gaza Strip were repaired. The daily pause in the fighting for the humanitarian corridor makes it possible to repair the infrastructure, to stock up on food delivered from Israel, to receive medical treatment and to transfer the wounded to hospitals in Egypt, and some even to Israel. To make the deliveries of humanitarian aid to the civilian population more efficient, every Israeli brigade fighting in the Gaza Strip is joined by a “humanitarian team,” which organizes the aid during brigade action.
Humanitarian aid from various countries continues arriving in the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing. For example, on January 12 a group of doctors from France, Germany and Greece entered the Gaza Strip. They will assist at the Red Crescent hospital in Khan Yunis (Agence France Presse, January 12, 2009). During the week five more doctors are expected to arrive from Lebanon (Al-Hayat, January 12, 2009).

At the same time, Palestinians continue trying to infiltrate into Egypt from the Gaza Strip. On January 12 ten Palestinians tried to enter Egypt near the Rafah crossing. As they were being detained by the Egyptian security forces, an Egyptian policeman was wounded by stones thrown by the Palestinians (Al-Yawm Al-Sabaa, January 12, 2009).

The Egyptian Initiative to Stop the Fighting – Update

On January 11, the Hamas delegation participated in another round of talks with Omar Suleiman, head of Egyptian general intelligence, and other senior intelligence figures. Muhammad Nasr, from the Hamas leadership in Damascus, and Salah Bardawil, from the Gaza Strip, left Cairo on January 11 to update the Hamas leadership on the results of the talks. On January 12 the Hamas delegation returned to Cairo with the responses of the “internal” and “external” Hamas leadership to the Egyptian initiative.

Some of the details of the talks were reported in the Arab media:

- On January 11, Egyptian and Palestinian sources told a correspondent from IslamOnLine that Egypt had tried to convince Hamas first of all to agree to a ceasefire and then to begin talks. The rationale was to reach an agreement for a mechanism for implementing Security Council Resolution 1860 and the Egyptian initiative. The sources described the talks as “positive and productive,” noting that the Egyptians had managed, “to a certain degree,” to convince the Hamas delegation to stop firing first and not to bind the ceasefire to the mechanism for its implementation.

- On January 11, Palestinian sources told the Al-Quds Al-Arabi newspaper that Hamas was asking for a “package deal” which included a lull arrangement. “Egyptian sources” told the paper that the talks had been difficult because Hamas refused to discuss the issue of the deployment of international forces and would agree to a two- or three-week ceasefire, during which it would be possible to deliver humanitarian aid and to hold talks about the final agreement. The sources also said that Egypt had
proposed a “new formula” for managing the crossings which included a return to the 2005 agreement (the Crossing Points Agreement on Movement and Access), and Hamas would be integrated into the Palestinian Authority apparatus which participated in managing the crossings.

- On January 11, “a well-placed Egyptian source” told an *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* correspondent that the Hamas delegation had presented its reservations regarding the Egyptian initiative and had reiterated its demands for an immediate cease fire, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip and the opening of the Gaza Strip crossings, including the Rafah crossing. Omar Suleiman made it clear to the Hamas delegation that the Egyptian initiative included components which required an immediate response, such as the ceasefire. The initiative contained, said the source, other issues which in the future would be discussed with Israel or with Mahmoud Abbas. The source also made it clear that Egypt would present the Hamas delegation’s reservations to the Israeli delegation headed by Amos Gilad when it came to Cairo.

**Responses of Senior Hamas Figures to the Egyptian Initiative**

- In public statements, senior Hamas figures try to present a softened response to the Egyptian initiative, even if in practical terms Hamas firmly adheres to its intransigent stance:
  - On January 12, Hamas’s Al-Aqsa TV broadcast a 20-minute recorded speech by Hamas administration prime minister Ismail Haniya. Haniya spoke about the political activity carried out through various channels. He said that Hamas did not reject the activity, adding that Hamas’s approach to every initiative would be positive if it would stop the IDF activity, remove the IDF from the Gaza Strip and require the opening of the crossings. “We will cooperate in a responsible, open, serious and positive fashion to any initiative that can make that happen.”

![Ismail Haniya speaks from a bunker (Al-Aqsa TV, January 12, 2009).](image-url)
• **Usama Hamdan**, Hamas representative in Lebanon, said that there were points in the Egyptian initiative that “currently need to be repaired.” He repeated Hamas’s familiar demands: the end of the IDF action, the withdrawal of the IDF from the Gaza Strip and the opening of the crossings. He added that Hamas opposed the deployment of international forces in the Gaza Strip, and that Egypt objected to their deployment on its territory. “Since Hamas and Egypt both insist on the same thing, Amos Gilad has to understand that he faces a fait accompli and has to find answers…” (Al-Jazeera TV, January 12, 2009).

• **Salah Bardawil**, a member of the Hamas delegation to the talks with Egypt, said that Hamas had not rejected the Egyptian initiative. He said that “we will not lose Egypt and will not enter into a media contest with it…” (Al-Quds Al-Arabi, January 12, 2009).

On the other hand, the Egyptian media continue severely criticizing Israel (sometimes with anti-Semitic undertones), but at the same time harshly attack **Iran, Syria** and **Hamas** for opposing Security Council Resolution 1860 and other initiatives for a ceasefire, and castigate Iran and Syria for encouraging Hamas to continue fighting. Some prominent examples are the following:

• **Al-Ahram (January 12):** An editorial criticized Khaled Mashal, who had “given Israel a new excuse to spill innocent blood...by stating that the movement opposes Security Council Resolution 1860...If the Palestinians, who are the victims, oppose the stopping of the fighting or an Israeli withdrawal, what can be expected from the aggressor, Israeli, except for a refusal to implement the resolution and to continue its military actions?!” The paper again stated that the rockets fired by Hamas into Israel were ineffective since in the current fighting they had caused the deaths of more than 900 Palestinians and destroyed the [Gazan] infrastructure, as opposed to the small number of Israelis harmed. It added that the rockets “make noise” rather than sowing death and destruction, and wondered “whether the time has not come for the leaders of Hamas and the other Palestinian factions to show more mercy for innocent civilians...”

• On January 12, **Galal Dwaydar** wrote an editorial for Al-Akhbar entitled “Hamas, Iran and Syria are guilty of the deaths of the shaheeds in Gaza.” He said that Hamas’s “unwise policy” “gave Israel the excuse to kill,” and that Hamas would not act that way **without the incitement and pressures from Iran and Syria, based on the millions of dollars they send the leaders of that movement every month.** He also said that Iran sought to exploit Hamas to give itself a role in the Arab world, while Syria “wants to whitewash the feeble, defeatist position it has shown by remaining silent over the occupation of the Golan [Heights] for almost 40 years [sic].”
On January 12, Egyptian satellite television hosted Mohammed Bassiouni, former Egyptian ambassador to Israel and head of the Foreign Relations National Security Committee at the Shura Council. He said that Hamas did not agree to the deployment of international forces in the Gaza Strip because it wanted to ensure its own presence there, and the continuation of its rocket supplies. He added that “it is well known that Iran plays a central role by urging Hamas to continue fighting and at the same time supplies it with rockets and [other] weapons. It is a contest of wills between two blocks: one that calls for calm, peace and stability in Egyptian leadership, and the other which calls for escalation and involving Egypt for the same of haggling over its own private interests...”

Fostering the Myth of Victory - Update

Disregarding the blow it suffered, the great destruction visited on the Gaza Strip, the many losses and harsh Egyptian criticism, in the midst of the fighting Hamas has begun constructing the myth of its “victory.” In our assessment, it was inspired by Hezbollah’s success to create the myth of “the divine victory” after the second Lebanon war, and to fix it in the public perception in Lebanon and the Arab world, and even in Israel and the international community. In the battle for hearts and minds, Hezbollah used the components of de-legitimizing the IDF operation in Lebanon, magnifying Hezbollah’s military capabilities, reinforcing Hezbollah’s existence as an organization with a military infrastructure (“the shield of Lebanon”), and eluding responsibility for the war.2

Even now, even before the dust has settled, it can be seen that Hamas is trying to foster a “myth of victory” in a similar fashion. Two of its components are the following:

- **De-legitimizing the IDF operation in the Gaza Strip:**

  1) **The Hamas media and Al-Jazeera TV,** which provides it with strategic support, constantly reiterate that the IDF is operating against the civilian population of the Gaza Strip. The message is reinforced by the constant, methodical presentation of horrific pictures of women and children hurt in IDF attacks. On the other hand, Hamas avoids issuing information about the many terrorist operatives killed or relating to the serious damage done to its military infrastructure.

  2) Hamas claims that Israel’s motives for Operation Cast Lead were political, involving the election of its leaders, and not about protecting its citizens, making no mention whatsoever of the massive amounts of rocket fire endured by Israel during the eight years which preceded the operation. (Note: What annoys Hamas is the overwhelming public and

---

2 A detailed analysis of the components can be found in our May 11, 2007 Bulletin entitled “Hezbollah as a case study of the battle for hearts and minds in the confrontation between Israel and the terrorist organizations” at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/hezbollah_e11c_0507.pdf.
political support in Israel for the operation, as opposed to the schisms within Israeli society during and especially after the second Lebanon war, which were well-exploited by Hezbollah for its propaganda.)

- Enlisting the Gaza Strip population in the armed campaign. The title reads “With spirit and blood we will redeem you, Gaza.” A poster drawn by Hamas-affiliated Omaya Jaha (Palestine-info website, January 13).

- **Glorifying Hamas’s military successes and downplaying those of the IDF:**

  1) Hamas’s main propaganda weapon in claiming “success” is the continued rocket fire into Israel (even though it has declined). Hamas also claims it and the other organizations can launch rockets deep into Israel for a number of months and that most of its military capabilities have not been utilized. Hamas’s propaganda machine quotes “commentators” who claim that Israel has not achieved anything in the operation, since the rocket fire continues without a stop and that Israel has drained its “bank of targets.”

  2) Hamas spokesmen emphasize that the Hamas administration is fully functional and continues providing the Gaza Strip residents with services. (Note: In actual fact, the Hamas administration is having a hard time functioning at all.) With a lack of success in the field, Hamas issues false announcements about its “successes in battle,” such as claiming to have abducted an IDF soldier on January 12, to have fired a rocket at an Israeli Air Force base 50 kilometers away, that its rockets can reach Tel Aviv, and that it blew up eleven Israeli tanks; all of the above are fabrications. It also shows the same pictures of wounded Israelis in hospitals again and again to create the impression that Israel has suffered many casualties. In our assessment, it is reasonable to assume that Hamas will try for a genuine operational achievement during the fighting or near its end which will support the claim of a Hamas “victory.”
False announcement: “Eleven Israeli tanks blown up by the Palestinian resistance, may Allah protect it” (PALDF, Hamas’s main forum, January 13).

**The Functioning of Hamas’s Propaganda Machine and its Spokesmen – Update**

- Since it was hit by an IDF bombardment, **Al-Aqsa TV** has not been broadcasting as usual and the quality of its broadcasts is low. Most of its programming consists of songs inciting violence against Israel or live broadcasts from the Gaza Strip (in many instances pictures taken from the Ramattan News Agency). Al-Aqsa TV continues providing updates of the events on the ground using crawlers which appear at the bottom of the screen every few minutes. The news is broadcast from an improvised studio, and there are occasional religious programs broadcast from studios outside the Gaza Strip which regularly host Islamic clerics and political commentators who try to keep up the Palestinians’ spirits. Sometimes there is an open line, usually following IDF attacks, to talk to Hamas terrorist operatives who report from the field.

- The Hamas leadership in the Gaza Strip has gone underground. The volume of telephone and studio interviews formerly given by senior Hamas figures has dwindled considerably. Some of them have completely disappeared from the media arena or occasionally surface with a written statement or a recorded speech (for example, a recorded speech and note to the press from Ismail Haniya, and the improvised interview with Mahmoud al-Zahar in his hiding place). With the Hamas leadership in the Gaza Strip absent from the screen, its place has been taken by the leadership in Syria (Khaled Mashal, Musa Abu Marzuq, Muhammad Nizal) and the Hamas representative in Lebanon (Usama Hamdan).

- The leading Hamas spokesman in the Gaza Strip is **Musheir al-Masri**, who has taken a starring role since the war began. Backup is supplied by Fawzi Barhoum, Ayman Taha, Ismail Radwan and Tahir al-Nunu. They have kept a low profile as well and go to television studios far less frequently than they did before Operation Cast Lead.
Hamas Makes Massive Use of the Civilian Population as Human Shields, Causing Them Harm (Update, January 13)

In recent days senior figures in Israeli military intelligence, the Israel Security Agency and the Ministry of Defense have revealed a number of examples of the use Hamas makes of civilians as human shields, and of the protests made by local residents:

- On January 12, Avi Dichter, Minister of Internal Security, told Israeli Army Radio that senior Hamas figures had taken shelter in the Shifa hospital, situated in an affluent section in the western part of Gaza City. He said that Hamas commanders stayed there, in some instances wearing hospital white coats. Sometimes they throw the medical teams out of their offices to hold meetings. He said that on January 10, terrorist operatives were ordered to come to the hospital to receive their salaries.

- Dichter added that after the Imad Akel mosque in Jabaliya had been attacked by the Israeli Air Force, there was a long secondary explosion, caused by explosives and ammunition the terrorists had stored there. The secondary explosions damaged a house near the mosque, injuring the family living there.

- At the January 11 government meeting, Yuval Diskin, head of the Israel Security Agency, said that there was clear evidence that the civilians in the Gaza Strip opposed the positioning of rocket launchers near their houses. Hamas does not treat such opposition lightly. There is also clear evidence that Hamas has killed dozens of Palestinian Fatah supporters in cold blood under cover of battle. He added that there was public criticism of the catastrophe Hamas has visited on the Gaza Strip (Cabinet Secretary’s briefing, January 11, 2009).

- General Amos Yadlin, Chief of Military Intelligence, reviewed the situation in the Gaza Strip and gave further evidence of the cynical use Hamas makes of the civilian population as human shields. He presented a video of a school and school yard completely booby-trapped by Hamas (Cabinet Secretary’s briefing, January 11, 2009).

---

3 For further information see our January 12 Bulletin entitled “Operation Cast Lead, Update No. 12” on our website.
Left: The school building. Right: The fuse (the white cord) around the building visible near the wall. (IDF Spokesman, January 11, 2009).
Operation Cast Lead
Update No. 14

IDF soldiers in action in the Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, January 13, 2009).
The Situation on the Ground

Ground combat

- IDF forces continued expanding the ground operation, reaching the outskirts of Gaza City, exposing and destroying terrorist infrastructure facilities. The IDF encountered Hamas squads, killing several dozen armed terrorists and detaining a number of suspects.

- An anti-tank missile was fired at IDF forces in the southern Gaza strip. An Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked the missile-launching squad with the help of the ground force and four terrorist operatives were hit. Later the force identified armed terrorists inside a building, and with armored support shot at them; the hit was verified.

- During searches conducted on the night of January 13, terrorists near the force opened fire, and two officers sustained serious wounds. Another officer and two soldiers sustained minor injuries. The force returned fire; the hit was verified. In another event, an IDF soldier sustained minor injuries and was also evacuated for medical treatment.

Israeli Air Force attacks

- The Israeli Air Force continues supporting the forces on the ground. In one instance the ground force identified a number of terrorists armed with anti-tank missiles and light arms, and the aircraft attacked the terrorists; the hit was verified.

- During the past 24 hours the IAF attacked more than 100 targets, among them:
  - About 40 tunnels in the southern Gaza strip used to smuggle weapons.
  - About ten weapons storehouses and sites for manufacturing weapons, including a store of vehicles and weapons in the house of a Hamas operative in the Gaza City zone.
  - A Hamas police headquarters in Gaza City.
  - IEDs meant to be used to attack IDF forces.
  - A rocket launcher ready for firing. (Click for video)
  - A mortar shell launching squad in the Jabaliya zone. Three armed terrorist operatives were hit.
  - About ten armed terrorist squads.
Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire into Israeli Territory

- The scope of rocket and mortar shell fire into Israel continues to decline. On January 13, nine rocket and ten mortar shell hits were identified. Most of the rockets fell close to the Gaza Strip. No long-range rockets were fired. Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead 485 rockets and 183 mortar shells have been fired.

- During the afternoon one of the rockets fell near a school in the city of Ashqelon at a time when children were studying in a fortified area inside. There were no injuries. Note: It was the ninth educational institution hit since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead. In all the attacks on schools no students were injured, but in several instances the buildings were damaged.

Rockets and Mortar Shells Fired at Israel during Operation Cast Lead

Humanitarian Aid Delivered to the Gaza Strip

Israel

- At 0900 hours on January 13 there was a three-hour pause in the fighting to make it possible to open a humanitarian corridor for Gaza Strip residents to stock up on food and repair the infrastructure. Hamas fired three rockets and four mortar shells into Israel during the pause. During the day 102 trucks carrying humanitarian aid and two fuel tankers entered the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom crossing. In addition, the Erez crossing
was opened for the passage of Palestinians with urgent humanitarian problems. Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead nearly 1,000 trucks carrying humanitarian aid have entered the Gaza Strip. On January 14 the humanitarian corridor opened between 1300 and 1600 hours.

**The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip**

- On January 13, Dr. Jacob Kellenberger, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, entered the Gaza Strip as part of a three-day visit to the region, during which he is supposed to meet with senior Israeli and Palestinian figures. He is expected to visit Shifa hospital in Gaza City (Agence France Presse, January 13, 2009). The UNRWA director of operations in Gaza said that on January 14, 40 foreign doctors would be integrated into the staff of Shifa, and denied that senior Hamas figures were using the hospital. He said that so far, 35,000 Palestinians had taken shelter in UNRWA schools and that his organization was working to open other centers (Filastin al-Yawm, January 13, 2009).

- The UNRWA general representative said that the organization received considerable help from the IDF in getting the largest possible number of trucks into the Gaza Strip, but complained that only one crossing was open (AP, January 13, 2009); the trucks use the Kerem Shalom crossing. Note: On January 12 the Karni crossing was also opened and 12 trucks passed through, but during searches in the area a tunnel was discovered, dug in the direction of the crossing, apparently for the purpose of carrying out a terrorist attack. The crossing was subsequently reclosed and has not yet been reopened for fear that additional tunnels have been dug.

**Additional humanitarian aid**

- Deliveries of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip continue through the Rafah crossing. It also serves to evacuate wounded Palestinians to Egypt: on January 14, about 40 wounded Palestinians and their attendants were taken by Egyptian ambulances to hospitals (Middle East News Agency, January 12, 2009).

- The Iranian ship which set sail on January 9 and passed through the Suez Canal on its way to the port of Gaza changed course after the Israeli Navy used the international naval communication channel to order it not to approach the shore. Ahmed Musawi, secretary general of the Iranian Red Crescent, said that various ways of delivering the ship’s cargo to Gaza were being examined. He said that if the ship was unable to unload its cargo in the Gaza port in the next two days, it would unload at an Egyptian port and the cargo would be transferred from there to the Gaza Strip (Mehr News Agency, January 13, 2009).
The boat of the organization calling itself Free Gaza, which was supposed to set sail for the Gaza Strip from Larnaka on January 12, returned to home port following technical difficulties. It is expected to set sail again on the morning of January 14 (Agence France Presse, January 13, 2009).

**Judea and Samaria**

The Israeli security forces continue counterterrorism activities in Judea and Samaria. On the night of January 13, eight rabble-rousers were detained at demonstrations against the border security fence at Beit Awa, west of Hebron. Another Palestinian was detained after an IDF force found a gun, 20 bullets and an IDF uniform in his house. The weapons and equipment were confiscated.

On January 13 a Palestinian terrorist tried to steal the weapon of a force patrolling near the village of Tarqumia, south of Hebron. The force responded by shooting at the terrorist, who later died of his wounds.

**The Egyptian Initiative to Stop the Fighting - Update**

On January 14, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon arrived in Egypt as part of a one-week flying tour to the Middle East. He came to support contacts for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. He expressed hope that the Egyptian initiative for a ceasefire would shortly be implemented, and called on the international community to take steps against smuggling weapons into the Gaza Strip. He also said the Gaza Strip crossings had to be fully opened. He said he hoped the Egyptian-Hamas meetings would achieve an immediate, comprehensive ceasefire (CNN, January 12, 2009). Ban Ki-Moon is supposed to visit Israel, Jordan and Syria, and said he would not hold direct talks with Hamas (Ynet, January 14, 2009).

**Responses of Senior Hamas Figures to the Egyptian Initiative**

The Hamas delegation to the talks in Cairo returned to Damascus. The Hamas political bureau in Damascus met to consult about the Egyptian initiative. The bureau confirmed five principles for a solution: the end of the Israeli “aggression,” the withdrawal of the IDF from the Gaza Strip, the lifting of the “siege,” the opening of the Rafah crossing and the refusal to agree to a permanent lull arrangement. It also mentioned that Hamas was not committed to negotiations concerning the prevention of smuggling and that it agreed to a temporary ceasefire which would make it possible to deliver humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip and leave time for negotiations. Palestinian sources reported that one reason for
Hamas’s frigid response was the way Egypt blamed it for “every failure” and “responsibility for the holocaust in Palestine” (Al-Watan, January 13, 2009).

- Hamas spokesmen continued commenting on the Egyptian initiative:
  - **Usama Hamdan**, Hamas representative in Lebanon, said that Hamas refused to agree to a long-term lull, since such an agreement would harm the “resistance” [i.e., the continuation of Palestinian terrorism against Israel]. He added that Hamas would not let political methods be used to give Israel what it had failed to achieve on the battlefield (Al-Hayat, January 13, 2009).
  - **Muhammad Nizal**, member of Hamas’s political bureau, denied that there was an argument between the Hamas “internal” and “external” leaderships regarding the Egyptian initiative. He said that there was agreement on every issue of the general framework of the political moves, and that in principle Hamas had no objection to the deployment of European monitors at the crossings (Al-Shark Radio, January 13, 2009).
  - Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** said that there were other initiatives besides Egypt’s (Palestine-info website, January 13, 2009). He also said that if the Egyptian initiative remained in its original form, Hamas would not be able to accept it (Quds Press Agency, January 13, 2009).
  - **Musa Abu Marzuq**, deputy head of the Hamas political bureau, said that the Egyptian initiative was a good opportunity to reach an arrangement, but that Hamas still had not abandoned its basic reservations (Al-Manar TV, January 13, 2009).

**Other Responses**

**Hamas**

- **Abu Usama Abd al-Mu’ti**, Hamas representative in Iran, appealed to the Islamic countries to send military equipment to the Gaza Strip to support it, since every “observant Muslim” had to help and send weapons to the fighters in Gaza. He said the United States had established an airlift to support Israel and that Muslims also had to support the Palestinians. He also said that more pressure had to be exerted to open the borders to deliver the aid (Islamic Republic News Agency, January 13, 2009).

- Meanwhile, in the Gaza Strip, the Hamas administration attempts to send a message of “business as usual,” and issued an announcement regarding the normal functioning of the administration ministries and the security apparatus, and the services they provide for the civilians. According to another announcement, workers would be paid for December (Palestine-info website, January 13, 2009).
According to an article in the Hezbollah-affiliated newspaper Al-Akhbar, senior Hezbollah figures are proud of having transferred their “resistance” (i.e., terrorism) perception to the Gaza Strip. They do not hide the fact that the contacts and supply lines to the Gaza Strip are direct, and say that the contact with the Gaza Strip continues. According to the paper, one particularly prominent example of aid was the ship Karin A, which transported weapons to Fatah. One of them even boasted that Hezbollah knows what was happening on the ground, “perhaps even more than what some of the [Palestinian] factions do” (Al-Akhbar, January 13, 2009).

---

1 The ship was purchased in Lebanon at the end of August 2001. It sailed from Lebanon to Sudan and anchored outside Port Sudan for 12 days while its name was changed to Karin A. From Sudan it sailed to the Yemenite port of Hodeidah, a journey of four days. In December 2001 it sailed to Iran where it took on many different types of weapons brought from Iranian army warehouses. The weapons were supposed to upgrade the military capabilities of the terrorist organizations. They were loaded into 83 containers which could be dropped into the water and were invisible on the surface, an Iranian innovation. The ship left for the Suez Canal to unload its cargo, which was consigned to the naval headquarters of the Palestinian Authority, on the shores of El-Arish and Gaza. On January 1, 2002, it was identified by the Israeli Navy which boarded and took control before it could enter the Suez Canal. The ship was brought to the port of Eilat with crew and cargo intact.
Appendix

Hamas Makes Massive Use of the Civilian Population as Human Shields, Causing Them Harm
(Update, January 14)

- For an article in the Israeli Arab paper Kul al-Arab, a telephone survey was held among Gazans asking their opinion about what was happening in the ground. “Khaled” from the Rimal neighborhood in Gaza City said “we are young children, [we go around] in small groups wearing civilian clothing, and carry out support missions for the men of the resistance. We report information about movements of army forces or bring them ammunition and food.” Sending children and adolescents on operational missions is both immoral and violates international law.

Using Mosques as Firing Positions and Weapons Storehouses

- During the ground operation in the Shati refugee camp on January 13, a mosque was discovered with large quantities of weapons, including an anti-tank missile launcher.

2 For the use made of children, see pp. 61-64 of “Hamas Exploitation of Civilians as Human Shields” at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/hamas_e028.pdf.
Operation Cast Lead—Update No. 15

Paratroopers on a night operation in the outskirts of Gaza City (IDF Spokesman, January 14, 2009)

Rockets still launched from central Gaza City (PALDF website, January 14, 2008)
Overview

- Over the past 24 hours, IDF forces have continued expanding the ground operations in the outskirts of Gaza City, wrestling control of more and more areas from the terrorists and carrying out raids deep into the Hamas-controlled urban territory. During the operations, the IDF forces encountered some terrorist squads, their assessment being that several dozen terrorists have been killed over the past 24 hours. A total of 16 soldiers were injured during today’s operations—one severely, two moderately, and thirteen lightly (IDF Spokesman, January 15).

- Since early morning, the Israeli Air Force raided over 50 targets, including 15 tunnels in the vicinity of Rafah which had been used for transporting rockets—including some longer-range rockets. Also attacked were about ten terrorist squads (including a terrorist seen setting an IED against Israeli troops), a weapon storehouse, about ten rocket launchers (including a Grad launcher ready to fire), as well as subterranean launch sites some of which were aimed and ready to fire at Israel.

- On the night of January 14-15, IDF forces continued their activity inside the Gaza Strip. Assisted by ground troops, the Air Force attacked over 60 targets, including more than 13 terrorist squads and five weapon storehouses. More than 25 terrorists were killed during the night. Israeli Navy vessels escorted the IDF forces and assisted by attacking Hamas targets from sea and enforcing the sea blockade on the Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, January 15).

- On January 15, at 5:30 PM, the Israeli Air Force attacked a building with several Hamas operatives inside: Sa’id Siyam, his brother Iyad Siyam, and Salah Abu Sharah, the head of Hamas’s internal security service in the Gaza Strip. The building was hit, and the three were killed. Sa’id Siyam was the Interior Minister in the Hamas administration, and the highest-ranking leader of Hamas killed in Operation Cast Lead. Another senior Hamas figure, Nizar Riyan, was killed early into the operation (for details on Sa’id Siyam, see Appendix B).
The fighting on the ground

A summary of the main events follows:

- An IDF force exposed weapons and military equipment hidden inside a mosque to the west of Gaza City; the weapons and equipment included IEDs, grenades, ballistic vests, and communication devices.
- An IDF force identified and shot a terrorist who was launching a mortar shell at Israel.
- A terrorist opened fire on IDF forces from a house to the east of Gaza City. An IDF force demolished the building and hit the terrorist who fired at them.
- An IDF force exposed and defused a rocket that was ready to be launched at Ashkelon.

Air Force strikes

A summary of the main events follows:

- The Air Force attacked a terrorist squad shortly after that squad fired an anti-tank rocket at IDF forces, as a result of which seven IDF soldiers were injured.
- The Air Force attacked two Hamas operatives in the Zaitoun area. The two were involved in fighting IDF forces and firing rockets at Israel.
- The Air Force attacked a mosque in Rafah which served as a rocket storehouse and a meeting place for senior operatives of the Hamas military-terrorist wing.

Click here to view the rocket exposure video

Tunnels blown up by IDF forces in Rafah (PALDF website, January 14)
Rockets and mortar shells fired at Israel

The slow decline in the number of rockets fired at Israel is continuing, even though rockets still land in cities as distant from the Gaza Strip as Beersheba and Ashdod. On January 15, there were 14 recorded rocket landings and 2 mortar shell landings in Israeli territory. An event of note occurred at around 1:00 PM, when a volley of six long-range 122-mm rockets was launched at Israel, landing in the cities of Ashdod and Beersheba. Some of the rockets were launched during the “humanitarian window”. No casualties were reported. A total of 485 rockets and 183 mortar shells landed in Israel since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead.
Transfer of humanitarian aid from Israel to the Gaza Strip

As in previous days, a “humanitarian corridor” was opened on January 14 between 1:00 PM and 4:00 PM in order to allow Gaza Strip residents to obtain supplies and carry out repairs. Since the early morning, 108 trucks passed through Kerem Shalom Crossing, including three fuel trucks bound for the Gaza power station. Erez Crossing was left open for urgent humanitarian needs. Since the beginning of the operation, over 1,133 trucks loaded with over 25,322 tons of humanitarian supplies and goods have entered the Gaza Strip.

The UNRWA coordinator in the Gaza Strip expressed his appreciation of Israel’s cooperation in delivering the humanitarian assistance sent by the UN to the Gaza Strip. However, he noted that the sanitary conditions in the Gaza Strip were a cause for severe concern, adding that the daily three-hour “humanitarian corridor” was not enough time to repair the water infrastructure in the Gaza Strip (Relief Web, January 14).

Humanitarian assistance through Egypt and Rafah Crossing

About 33 injured Palestinians from the Gaza Strip crossed into Egypt through Rafah Crossing to receive medical aid. They were brought by 25 ambulances which entered the Gaza Strip from Egypt (Middle East News Agency, January 14). In addition to the evacuation of the wounded:

- Fourteen Sudanese physicians arrived at the crossing on their way to do volunteer work in Gaza Strip hospitals (Islam On Line, January 14).
- Eleven aid planes carrying about 450 tons of medications and food landed at the Al-Arish airport, including four planes from Morocco and one plane each from Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Egypt (Middle East News Agency, January 14).
- Four aid planes belonging to the Jordanian Air Force departed for the Al-Arish airport. The planes are carrying food supplies (Middle East News Agency, January 14).
- About 80 tons of medications sent by Qatar and by an Egyptian businessman were brought into the Gaza Strip.
Also, it was reported that the *Spirit of Humanity* aid ship left the Larnaka port en route to the Gaza Strip in the morning of January 14 with 21 passengers and crewmen on board. The passengers included physicians, journalists, left-wing activists, and a shipment of medical supplies (Free Gaza website, January 14).

**The Lebanese border**

Three rocket hits were detected at 8:30 AM. They were fired from the region of Rashaya al-Fukhar (a Christian village in the eastern sector) in south Lebanon. Two hits were detected in Lebanese territory; no third hit was detected. The residents of Kiryat Shmona and neighboring areas were instructed to go into their bomb shelters. Three civilians suffered stress-related trauma. No organization claimed responsibility for the rocket fire. The IDF responded by firing artillery at the launch site.

A UNIFIL spokeswoman said that during a search conducted by UNIFIL forces and the Lebanese army in the territory, **three more rockets** were found that were ready to be launched at Israel. She also said that UNIFIL forces were on alert (AFP, January 14).

**Nawaf al-Moussawi**, the head of Hezbollah’s office of international relations, accused UNIFIL of failing to meet its obligations and noted that the responsibility rested on the Lebanese government. He also criticized Israel for reacting to the incident and called upon all Lebanese to “stand firm in light of that attack” (OTV, January 14). The spokesman of the PFLP-GC (a pro-Syrian terrorist organization supposedly responsible for the previous incident of rocket fire during Operation Cast Lead) refused to take responsibility. However, he expressed his support in
principle for any military action from Lebanese territory in response to the IDF’s activity in the Gaza Strip (Quds Press, January 14).

It is the second time that rockets are launched from Lebanon into Israeli territory since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead. On the morning of January 8 (at about 7:45 AM), 2-3 rockets were fired from the eastern sector of south Lebanon to the Western Galilee. One rocket hit a senior citizens home in Nahariya, causing damage to the building and light injuries to several people. Another rocket landed in a Western Galilee town. In both cases, Hezbollah denied responsibility.

The Egyptian initiative -- update

On January 14, the Hamas delegation visited Cairo once again to hold talks about the Egyptian initiative. Hamas sources as well as an Egyptian source told Arab and Egyptian media that Hamas agreed to the Egyptian initiative. Later on, delegation members and senior Hamas figures clarified that Hamas still had reservations and that there were still points of contention left. On January 15, Amos Gilad, chief of the Israeli Defense Ministry’s Security-Diplomatic Bureau, will visit Cairo in order to study Hamas’s response and convey to the Egyptians Israel’s demands about the smuggling of weapons into the Gaza Strip (a key issue in the talks for ending the fighting).

Main statements of Hamas seniors

Following are the main statements made by Hamas senior figures about the Egyptian initiative:

• Salah al-Bardawil, a member of the Hamas delegation for the Egypt talks, said in a press conference that the Egyptian initiative was the single one offered to Hamas. He added that Hamas did not object to the initiative and was not talking about changing it. Hamas presented to the Egyptians several reservations which Egypt will deliver to Israel (Al-Jazeera TV, January 14).

• Muhammad Nasr, a member of the Hamas delegation, noted that Hamas’s compliance with Egypt’s efforts did not mean that Hamas agreed to the Egyptian initiative.

1 See our Information Bulletin: “Rockets hit Western Galilee, initial report” (January 8, 2009).
He said that there were still some controversial issues and that Hamas would continue examining the issue (Ramattan News Agency, January 14).

- Moussa Abu Marzouq, the Deputy Chairman of the Hamas Political Bureau, noted that there were several principal comments which Hamas brought up regarding the Egyptian draft. Those comments pertain to the length of the lull in the fighting, the withdrawal of IDF forces, the ceasefire, and the control at the crossings and along the borders. As for the length of the lull in the fighting, Abu Marzouq stressed that it had to be short and must not be of indeterminate length, thus denying the “resistance” (terrorism) of its “right” to continue its actions. He added Hamas was the body currently administering the Gaza Strip, and said that it had to be reflected in a new agreement about the management of Rafah Crossing (according to Abu Marzouq, the crossings agreement from 2005 is no longer legally valid) (Al-Alam TV, January 14).

- Muhammad Nazzal, a Hamas Political Bureau member, noted that Hamas neither rejected nor agreed to the Egyptian initiative. The Hamas delegation demanded that corrections be made to several clauses in the agreement, and if they were approved, Hamas would agree and commit to the initiative. He added that the ball was now in Israel’s court, and it was expected to send a representative to Cairo on January 15 (Amos Gilad) who would be presented with Hamas’s demands (Al-Jazeera TV, January 14).

As for the Egyptian response, the Al-Ahram newspaper (January 14) wrote that the talks held by Egyptian intelligence chief Omar Suleiman with the Hamas delegation in Cairo were “positive and encouraging”, and that it was fully convinced about the Egyptian initiative. It appears, however, that there is a schism between the Hamas leadership in the Gaza Strip and the Hamas leadership abroad, mostly in Syria, which is pressured by Iran and Syria to reject the Egyptian initiative or to try to exert pressure on it. According to the article, the leaders in the Gaza Strip “are showing great willingness to consent to the Egyptian initiative... driven by the desire to protect the civilians’ lives”. The article calls upon Hamas to unite “and to get rid of the pressure which does not serve its own purposes but rather the purposes of other regional elements [i.e., Iran and Syria] that do not want a solution...”
Creating the “myth of victory” by Hamas (update)

Hamas continues its attempts to create a “myth of victory”—despite the blow it took, despite the immense destruction caused in the Gaza Strip, despite the heavy losses, and before the fighting is actually over. Those attempts are orchestrated by the Hamas leadership; however, Hamas’s media in the Gaza Strip do their best to follow its lead. Moussa Abu Marzouq, the Deputy Chairman of the Hamas Political Bureau, claimed that in practice “victory was already achieved”, which is why he expected the Israeli “aggression” to stop soon (interview to the Iranian Al-Alam TV, January 14).

In the past several days, further attempts have been made to perpetuate the myth of victory based on several components:

- **De-legitimization of the IDF’s operation in the Gaza Strip:** Hamas continues its efforts to undermine the legitimacy of the Israeli military operation by emphasizing the civilian casualties. Moussa Abu Marzouq: Israel has military superiority “only when it murders women and children” (Al-Alam TV, January 14). Khaled Mash'al noted that viewers watching the news coming in from the Gaza Strip were seeing a tragic image of “Zionist massacres, murder of children and women, bombings of schools, mosques, hospitals, and ambulances”; “we are seeing images of killed children and body parts” (failing to mention the damage caused to terrorists and terrorist infrastructure) (Al-Watan, January 14).

- **Israel is having military failures compared to so-called military “successes” made by Hamas.** Moussa Abu Marzouq: the IDF forces are only advancing “several feet” in all confrontation sites. The IDF failed in accomplishing its goals and therefore passed on the failure to the Israeli political leadership; “resistance” operatives caused many casualties to Israel (Al-Alam TV, January 14). Muhammad Nazzal, a Political Bureau member, claimed that over the past 24 hours terrorist operatives (“resistance”) managed to kill 17 IDF soldiers, including a senior commander (Al-Jazeera, January 14). The Hamas media brought up the false claim that the fire which broke out in the Ashdod chemical factory (January 14) was caused as a result of a rocket landing. Al-Aqsa TV aired a video “documenting” Hamas operatives breaking into a house where IDF forces barricaded themselves in western Beit Lahiya, claiming that five IDF soldiers were killed in the incident (in the investigation we conducted, the IDF forces are not familiar with such incident) (Al-Aqsa TV, January 14).
On the ideological sphere: Hamas stresses that it will not bow down to pressure to abandon the strategy of “resistance” (terrorism).

Khaled Mash'al, the Chairman of the Hamas Political Bureau, said that the Zionists wanted Hamas to stop the resistance (terrorism) and compared it to the occupation, however, “Gaza Strip residents will not surrender to the injustice of that invidious equation” (interview to the daily Al-Watan, Bahrain, January 14). Moussa Abu Marzouq, the Deputy Chairman of the Political Bureau, stressed that in its contacts with Egypt, Hamas would not agree to a prolonged lull in the fighting, so that the lull would not deny the “resistance” of its “right” to continue operating and achieve its goals (Al-Alam TV, January 14). Khaled Mash’al (falsely) noted that the “Zionist army” was still standing on the outskirts of the Gaza Strip, that it did not enter the residential areas, and that it lost more than 20 soldiers and officers (Bahraini daily Al-Watan, January 14).

Osama Bin Laden calls for jihad to stop the “aggression” against the Gaza Strip

On January 14, Osama Bin Laden released a new audio tape. It was produced by Al-Sahab, Al-Qaeda’s media production center. The tape is titled “Call for jihad to stop the aggression against Gaza” and it is 22 minutes long. In the tape, Bin Laden calls young Muslims to “carry out the duty of jihad against the Zionist-Crusader alliance and against its agents in the region [i.e., pro-Western regimes]...” According to Bin Laden, jihad is the only way to take back the Al-Aqsa mosque and Palestine. In our assessment, such calls made by Bin Laden and other senior Al-Qaeda figures may encourage global terrorist networks to perpetrate terrorist attacks against Israeli, Jewish, and Western targets.
Using mosques as firing positions and places to store weapons

During the activity of IDF forces on January 14, a mosque was uncovered that served as a storage place for many weapons. Some of them were hidden in a cache built under the imam’s podium.

Weapons discovered in the mosque (IDF Spokesman, January 15)
The houses of operatives belonging to Hamas and other terrorist organizations are frequently used for storing weapons. IDF forces discovered large quantities of weapons in the houses of terrorist operatives’ families, where civilians who are not involved in terrorist activity reside as well.
Initial biographic details on Sa'id Siyam, a member of the Hamas leadership and Minister of Internal Affairs and National Security in the Hamas administration

- **Full name**: Sheikh Sa'id Muhammad Sha'ban Siyam ("Abu Muss'ab")

- **Origin/place of residence**: born in Al-Shati refugee camp, Gaza, 1959, resident of the Gaza City neighborhood of Sheikh Radwan. His family is from the village of Al-Jura near Ashkelon (also the origin of Ahmed Yassin and Ismail Haniyah).

- **Marital status**: married and father of six.

- **Education**: studied at a teachers' seminar in Ramallah and was trained as a teacher of science and mathematics. He completed his studies in the Open University of Al-Quds with a B.A. in Islamic culture.

- **Activities**: in the past, he worked in one of UNRWA's schools in Gaza. He left his position as a result of disagreements with his employers due to his political affiliation. He was involved in social activity as part of Hamas's da'wah network. He worked as a preacher and volunteer imam in Gaza Strip mosques.

- **Status and activity in Hamas**:
  
  - Siyam was a member of Hamas's leadership in the Gaza Strip, and took part in its decision making. With the outbreak of the violent confrontation (the Al-Aqsa intifada), his political status within Hamas strengthened.
  
  - Between December 2001 and April 2002, he was the Hamas spokesman. He was responsible for establishing Hamas's Radio Al-Aqsa station, operating from the Gaza Strip. He was elected for the legislative council and won many votes.
In 2003, he became member of the Hamas political leadership in the Gaza Strip. As Minister of Internal Affairs in the Hamas administration, he was one of the highest-ranking, most influential people. Siyam was the one who established Hamas's Executive Force which was Hamas’s spearhead of clashes with the Palestinian Authority and was used as the main force for oppressing Fatah and Hamas’s other opponents.

He was one of the leaders in the Hamas military takeover of the Gaza Strip. Following the Hamas takeover, he was the one in charge of the police and the internal security services, which were brutally employed against Hamas's opposition.

**Arrests by Israel and the Palestinian Authority:** he was arrested by Israel four times in the years 1989-1992. He was among the group of Hamas's activists who were expelled to Lebanon (1992) and were allowed to return later. He was arrested twice by the Palestinian Authority security services (1995).

**Statements he made after being elected Minister of Internal Affairs:** after he entered office, he declared that he would not stop the members of the "resistance" (that is, those who perpetrate acts of terrorism against Israel) due to his belief that "resistance" was "a legitimate right of the Palestinian people" (Maan News Agency, March 24). His fundamental support of terrorism is highly significant, because in his capacity as Minister of Internal Affairs he was in charge of the Palestinian security services which support the military-terrorist wing of Hamas.
Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert announces the Cabinet’s decision that the IDF will hold its fire in the Gaza Strip in response to the Egyptian president’s appeal (Photo by Ra’anan Cohen, courtesy of NRG).
Implementing the Cabinet Decision to Hold Fire in the Gaza Strip

Overview

During the past 24 hours events focused on the announcement made by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert on the night of January 17, after a Political-Security Cabinet meeting. According to the announcement, the IDF would be instructed to cease attacks and hold its fire as of 0200 hours, January 18, 2009. The decision had been made, he said, in response to an appeal from Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, after the goals of Operation Cast Lead had been fully realized. The most important goal, he reported, was the severe blow dealt to Hamas's military-terrorist infrastructure, including weapons storehouses, its rocket firing network and operatives belonging to Hamas and the other terrorist organizations operating in the Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, January 18, 2009). (For the full texts of the statements made by the prime minister and defense minister, see the Appendices).

In the meantime, on January 18 the Egyptian president hosted a conference at Sharm el-Sheikh, attended by regional and international leaders, in support of the initiative (which is still under discussion) and to provide a counterweight to the regional summit held in Doha on January 16 by the rejectionist countries inspired by the Iranian-Syrian axis.

Following the Cabinet decision to accept the Egyptian initiative and hold its fire in the Gaza Strip, the IDF took the necessary steps to implement it. According to the IDF Spokesman, when the decision went into effect at 0200 hours on January 18, the IDF forces would be redeployed and that operational orders for opening fire would be changed. The main line would be that fire at IDF forces and Israel would be returned, making it clear that any and all fire directed at Israel and IDF forces would be met with a strong reprisal. According to the Chief of Staff and Head of the Southern Command, the operation has not yet been terminated and IDF forces were instructed to remain on full alert. Orders from the Israeli homeland command regarding the defense of the southern population centers remain without change in light of the possibility of continued rocket fire (IDF Spokesman, January 18, 2009).

Initially, Hamas responded with belligerent statements and rocket and mortar shell attacks immediately after the announcement and on January 18. However, in the afternoon, Musa Abu Marzuq, deputy head of Hamas's political bureau, announced that Hamas and the other organizations were declaring a ceasefire, and that they demanded the crossings be opened and that the IDF forces leave the Gaza Strip within a week.
The situation on the ground since Israel’s announcement it would hold its fire

On the morning of January 18, several hours after the Israeli Cabinet announcement stating the IDF would hold its fire, armed terrorists opened fire at IDF forces near the Saja‘iya neighborhood of Gaza City. The IDF returned fire. Two of the attackers responsible were identified by the ground force and struck from the air. In addition, since the IDF began holding its fire, Hamas and the other terrorist organizations have continued their rocket attacks against Israel (as of 1800 hours, January 18).

The ground fighting before the IDF firing stopped

Until Israel unilaterally ordered its forces to hold their fire, the IDF forces operated on the ground continued to increase their incursion into Gaza City, destroying the terrorist infrastructure and hitting squads. The main events were the following:

- **January 16**: During ground operations the IDF identified a squad of armed terrorists firing a mortar shell into Israeli territory. With immediate air backup the site was attacked and the squad was hit.

- **January 17**: During ground operations in the northern Gaza Strip, two armed terrorists were identified hiding inside a house and shooting from it. Later searches revealed large quantities of weapons, including explosive belts, IEDs and hand grenades.

- **January 17**: An IDF force was shot at in the northern Gaza Strip by a terrorist inside a house. With combat engineering backup, the force attacked the house. In another event, an IDF force operating in the northern Gaza Strip identified a terrorist armed with an anti-tank missile nearby. An Israeli Air Force plane struck the terrorist.

The IDF in action in the Gaza Strip, January 17 (IDF Spokesman, January 17, 2009).
Israel casualties, January 17-18

On January 17 and 18, until the ceasefire went into effect, five Israeli soldiers were critically wounded and several others sustained minor to moderate injuries in a number of incidents:

- An anti-tank missile was fired at an IDF infantry force operating in the central Gaza Strip. One soldier was critically injured, another sustained moderate injuries and three sustained slight injuries.
- Two officers and two soldiers from a paratrooper brigades were seriously injured by friendly fire in the northern Gaza Strip.

Israeli Air Force strikes

On January 17 and 18 the Israeli Air Force attacked scores of targets:

- Dozens of tunnels under the Egypt-Gaza border.
- Rocket launching sites, some of them with long-range rockets ready for launching. A rocket launching site located inside a mosque was also attacked.
- Two rocket launchers which had attacked the cities of Ashdod and Kiryat Gat were struck shortly after they were fired.
- Squads of armed terrorists.
- Hamas posts.
- Bunkers and storehouses for weapons, including rockets.
- A mosque in Gaza City which served as a weapons storehouse, and the tunnel under it.
- IEDs ready for detonation.
Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire into Israeli Territory

- Over the past few days, the extent of fire has been an average of 20 rockets and six mortar shells:
  - **On January 15, 15 rocket and eight mortar shell hits** were identified. During the morning a barrage of four rockets was fired at the city of Ashdod. One of the rockets fell in the yard of a house; a civilian was treated for shock. At approximately 1700 hours a long-range rocket landed close to a car in Beersheba, critically wounded two Israeli civilians, one of them a nine-year old boy. Six civilians sustained minor injuries.
  - **On January 16, 22 rocket and five mortar shell hits** were identified. At approximately 1400 hours a rocket hit the southern city of Kiryat Gat. Two civilians sustained minor injuries and two others were treated for shock. At approximately 1500 hours a rocket hit a house in the city of Ashdod. One civilian was moderately wounded and another sustained minor injuries; 15 civilians were treated for shock.
  - **On January 17, 19 rocket and five mortar shell hits** were identified. A relatively large number of rockets landed in the Beersheba region. Several civilians were treated for shock. Eight of the rocket hits were identified after Israel announced it had held its fire.
  - As of the afternoon of **January 18**, sporadic rocket (including long-range rockets) and mortar shell fire continued.

- Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead, **555 rockets and 203 mortar shells** have hit Israeli territory.

Rockets and Mortar Shells Fired at Israel during Operation Cast Lead

**Humanitarian Aid Delivered to the Gaza Strip**

**Israel**

- Humanitarian aid deliveries from Israel into the Gaza Strip continue. Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead approximately 1,400 trucks have crossed into the Gaza Strip:
  - **January 18**: 176 trucks and four diesel fuel tankers were expected to cross into the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom and Karni crossings.
  - **Saturday, January 17**: In an exceptional act (the crossings remain closed on Saturdays) the Kerem Shalom crossing was opened to allow humanitarian aid to be delivered to the Gaza Strip. More than 50 trucks entered, some of them for UNRWA and the rest for the private sector. In addition, 115,000 liters of diesel fuel were delivered for the Gaza power plant, and the humanitarian corridor opened for three hours, between 1200 and 1500 hours.
  - **January 16**: The humanitarian corridor was extended to four hours, from 1000 to 1400 hours, to enable Gazans to stock up on necessities and make repairs to the infrastructure; 76 trucks entered the Gaza Strip.

**The Rafah crossing**

- During the past few days there was a great deal of traffic through the Rafah crossing. Scores of foreign nationals entered the Gaza Strip, some of them doctors and medical teams from Arab countries. There were also scores of foreign correspondents from Europe, the
United States and other countries. The sick and wounded continue leaving the Gaza Strip for medical treatment in Egypt. Large amounts of aid continue arriving in Sinai by sea and air from Arab and Muslim countries, and are delivered to the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing.

**The sea**

- The Spirit of Humanity, a ship belonging to the organization calling itself Free Gaza, which set sail from Cyprus on January 14, returned to its home port on January 15. That was after the Israeli Navy prevented it from continuing to Gaza, in accordance with the IDF’s maritime closure of the Gaza Strip. The foreign ministry of Greece, whose flag the ship was flying, lodged a protest and called on Israel to ensure the safety of those on board (Agence France Presse, January 15, 2009).

**The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip**

- **Health**: The hospitals in the Gaza Strip are full. The head of the World Health Organization said that there was no need for more doctors in the Gaza Strip, especially general practitioners, and that there was no shortage of drugs. He said that the organization needed only money (AP, January 16, 2009). On January 18 Israel opened a front-line emergency room at the Erez crossing to treat civilians from the Gaza Strip. It was opened by the Ministry of Health through the Israeli Magen David Adom in coordination with Welfare Minister Yitzhak Herzog. It will be operated as part of the Israeli government’s humanitarian efforts to help the civilian population in the Gaza Strip (Israeli Foreign Ministry, January 18, 2009).

- **Food**: Most of the stores in the Gaza Strip are empty and there is a shortage of meat, fruits and vegetables, and dairy products. The main problem for the Gazans is the inaccessibility of distribution points and stores. The civilian population is afraid to go outside even during the humanitarian corridor, lest they be hurt. Israel, in coordination with UNRWA, has arranged ways to access the organization’s institutions to improve their ability to transfer additional food and humanitarian aid.

- **Refugees**: During the combat thousands of civilians left their houses and moved to safe havens and centers in Gaza City, and have not yet begun to return.

- **Infrastructure**: In the past few days Israel has coordinated the main repairs to the infrastructure, including electricity and sewage. A technical fault on the Palestinian side of the Nahal Oz crossing was repaired; it had prevented the Palestinians from taking the fuel which
had been delivered by Israel and was piling up at the terminal. The repairs made it possible to deliver fuel to the Gaza Strip power plant. Israeli aid made it possible to repair the infrastructure, and 85% of Gaza’s electricity has been restored.

- During the past week, by means of the situation room for humanitarian aid set up by the Coordinator of Government Actions in the Occupied Territories and the Foreign Ministry, an attempt was made to coordinate with elements in the Gaza Strip to arrange for the repair of Gaza’s main sewage-system facility, which is situated in Beit Lahiya. However, as a result of the lack of organization on the Palestinian side, and despite IDF guarantees, difficulties were encountered and the repairs were made only after six days. On January 15, Palestinian teams set out to repair the facility to make it possible for the Gaza Strip’s sewage system to function again. While the repairs were carried out the IDF forces operating in the region took defensive positions and stopped offensive operations.

**Claims Hamas confiscates humanitarian aid**

- Claims continue to be made that Hamas confiscates the humanitarian aid reaching the Gaza Strip. According to reports, the aid is sold to civilians, especially to Hamas supporters. According to a Fatah forum surfer, “The aid goes into the Hamas storehouses and they sell it to the poor civilians...who are forced to wear green berets [signifying affiliation with Hamas] to be able to buy. If you don’t wear a green beret, you won’t get anything to eat or drink in Gaza.” Another surfer added that “the Hamas militias take the aid and give it to Hamas activists...Hamas sells the aid...at inflated prices.” He complained that the aid is not distributed by organizations such as UNRWA and the Red Cross, but by Hamas itself (The Fatah forum, January 15, 2009).

**Accidental Fire at Civilian Facilities**

- During the past few days there were a number of incidents in which the IDF accidentally hit civilian sites, such as a hospital and UNRWA facilities. Those events occurred because there was identified fire at IDF forces by terrorists inside or near the locations. On January 15, Al-Quds hospital in the Tel al-Hawa neighborhood was hit, and in another instance, UNRWA’s main compound was hit and its food warehouse burned.

- The incidents led to a wave of condemnation of Israel and its activity in the Gaza Strip. The IDF Spokesman responded by saying that IDF soldiers had been attacked by terrorist operatives firing either from inside or nearby the locations, and that the attacks included rifle fire at the soldiers and rocket and mortar shell launches into Israeli territory. IDF soldiers, he said, return fire while trying to avoid harming civilians. However, in certain instances civilian
facilities were accidentally damaged. IDF forces react against every attempt made to hurt them, out of self-defense (IDF Spokesman, January 16, 2009).

The Political Arena: Activity to Halt the Fighting

Israel Announced It Would Hold Its Fire in Response to an Egyptian Appeal

On January 17 the Political Security Cabinet decided to instruct the IDF to hold its fire and stop the attacks on the Gaza Strip as of 0200 hours on January 18. That would be done in response to appeals made by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. According to Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, the objectives of the operation had been fully reached: Hamas’s terrorist infrastructure had been seriously hit, as had its stores of weapons, rocket launching capabilities and terrorist operatives. According to the decision, IDF forces would remain in the Gaza Strip in defensive positions until it became clear that Hamas honored the ceasefire.

The decision to hold fire was made after it became clear that Egypt had not reached any understanding which Hamas which would make it possible to arrange an agreement between the sides (For the full texts of the statements made by the prime minister and defense minister after the Cabinet meeting, see Appendices II and III).

Israel and the United States sign memorandum of understandings

On January 16, before Israel declared it would hold its fire, a memorandum of security-intelligence understandings was signed by Israel and the United States regarding prevention of the supply of arms and related materiel to terrorist groups. The memorandum, which in the coming days is supposed to be translated into
operational plans, set a precedent by declaring that Iran was the source of materiel smuggled into the Gaza Strip. The memorandum includes American commitments to use its intelligence, military, naval and NATO resources to deal with smuggling through the Red Sea and East Africa (For the full text of the memorandum, see Appendix I).

**Conference at Sharm el-Sheikh**

- On January 18 Egypt is expected to host a conference at Sharm el-Sheikh with the participation of regional and international leaders. It will deal with the situation in the Gaza Strip, support the Egyptian initiative and be a counterweight for the meeting held in Doha on January 16 and attended by the countries which opposed the initiative, led by Iran and Syria. Among the participants at the Sharm el-Sheikh meeting will be the UN secretary general, the British prime minister, the chancellor of Germany, the president of France, the prime minister of Italy and the Czech president. The United States and Israel will not attend.

**Rejectionist Conference in Doha**

- On January 16 an informal conference was held in Doha, Qatar, attended by radical Islamic leaders. It was held following the Egyptian and Saudi Arabian success in preventing the convening of an emergency summit meeting of leaders of the Arab League.

- The conference was boycotted by the moderate Arab countries and Mahmoud Abbas, but exceptional appearances were made by the heads of two terrorist organizations, Ahmed Jibril and Ramadan Shallah (Al-Quds TV, January 16). It ended with announcements by Qatar and Mauritania that they were suspending relations with Israel, a call to suspend the Arab peace initiative and a request to send rehabilitation funds directly to the Gaza Strip [i.e., that the funds reach Hamas]. Twelve of the 22 members of the Arab League attended, the most prominent of which were Syria and Lebanon; the president of Iran also participated.

---

1 For further information see our January 12, 2009 Bulletin entitled “Iranian support of Hamas” at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/iran_e004.pdf.
Despite its belligerent proclamations and the continued rocket and mortar shell attacks against Israel during the first half of January 18, at noon Hamas declared it agreed to a ceasefire. Musa Abu Marzuq, deputy head of the Hamas political bureau in Damascus, held a press conference at which he stated that “we, the factions of the Palestinian resistance, declare a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. [We] repeat our position and demands for a withdrawal of the enemy forces from the Gaza Strip within one week and the opening of the crossings...to allow the delivery of the goods necessary for our people in the Gaza Strip...” (Syrian TV, January 18, 2009). Senior Hamas figure Ayman Taha said that Hamas announced the immediate cessation of its activities and those of the other [terrorist] organizations in the Gaza Strip. He added that Hamas had given Israel an “extension” of a week to withdraw its forces from the Gaza Strip (Reuters, January 18, 2009).

Previously, Hamas spokesmen were quick to state that the Israel announcement that it was holding its fire was a victory for Hamas and proved the IDF’s helplessness. The speakers also threatened that Hamas would continue operating against the IDF forces which remained in the Gaza Strip until their full withdrawal. At the same time, Hamas signaled it intended to continue its political efforts to reach an agreement, as its heads noted they would examine every initiative, idea or suggestion which might bring “a lifting of the siege” and the opening of the crossings.

The terrorist organizations’ first response to the statement made by prime minister Olmert was to fire a number of rockets into Israeli territory, including long-range rockets, on the evening of January 17 and on January 18. They made it clear that the rocket fire was
their response to Israel's announcing it would hold its fire and that it was meant to emphasize Olmert's failure to break Hamas. However, on the afternoon of January 18, Hamas, as noted above, announced that it and the other organizations agreed to the ceasefire noted above.

The first responses to the Israeli Prime Minister's announcement were the following:

- **Musa Abu Marzuq**, deputy head of Hamas's political bureau said that Olmert's statements proved he [Olmert] had failed. He said that Ehud Barak was right when he said that Israel had weakened Hamas, but that it had not been broken, as Olmert tried to make people think. He added that Hamas was continuing its talks with Egypt and would accept an agreement that would suit its needs (Al-Arabiya TV, January 18, 2009).

- **Usama Hamdan**, Hamas representative in Lebanon, said that Olmert's speech was full of lies and that Hamas had not been damaged as he said it had. Hamdan said that Olmert's statements themselves proved the firm stance of the “resistance” [i.e., terrorist organizations]. He also said that Hamas was in control of the situation on the ground and that the IDF's continued presence in the Gaza Strip would serve to extend the “resistance” against it (Al-Jazeera TV, January 17, 2009).

- Hamas spokesman **Fawzi Barhoum** said that Israel had begun the war but would not decide how it ended (Al-Aqsa TV, January 17, 2009). He condemned Israel for its unilateral holding of fire instead of ratifying the agreement brokered by Egypt, describing the Israel decision as an attempt to precede the Egyptian and other efforts. He said that Israel's unilateral holding of fire was meaningless and did not mean the “lifting of the siege” (Reuters, January 18, 2009).

**Other responses to the Israeli announcement**

**Egypt**

- **Hossam Zaki**, spokesman for the Egyptian foreign ministry, said that Israel's unilateral decision might to serve the continuation of Egypt's efforts to prevent another broad military action in the Gaza Strip and to reach an arrangement for opening the crossings. He said that Mahmoud Abbas would not participate in the Sharm el-Sheikh conference because he had met with president Mubarak beforehand (FTV TV, January 17, 2009).

- As to the memorandum signed by Israel and the United States, Egyptian foreign minister Abu al-Ghait said that it had nothing to do with Egypt and did not obligate it. He said that any agreement between the United States and Israel dealing with Egyptian territory did not obligate Egypt.
The United States

American Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice gave her blessing to the halting of fire, saying that the United States expected all sides to stop their hostile operations immediately. She called for immediate, coordinated international action to increase the aid to the Gaza Strip. She reiterated that the United States’ goal remained the establishment of a continuing, firm ceasefire that would bring stability to the region. She expressed her appreciation for the efforts Egypt had invested and America’s worry about the suffering of the Palestinian civilians (Agence France Presse, January 18, 2009).

The UN

While in Lebanon, Ban Ki-Moon, UN secretary general, told a press conference that alongside its unilateral holding of fire, Israel had to present a timetable for withdrawing its troops from the Gaza Strip.

Britain

British foreign minister Miliband said that Israel’s announcement was “a tremendous relief” and that what was necessary now was for Hamas to stop firing its rockets at Israel. He also asked that it be made possible for the relief agencies to enter the Gaza Strip immediately and that their safety be ensured.
Memorandum between Israel and the United States regarding the Prevention of Weapons Smuggling

Memorandum of Understanding Between Israel and the United States Regarding Prevention of the Supply of Arms and Related Materiel to Terrorist Groups

Israel and the United States (the “Parties”),

Recalling the steadfast commitment of the United States to Israel's security, including secure, defensible borders, and to preserve and strengthen Israel’s capability to deter and defend itself, by itself, against any threat or possible combination of threats;

Reaffirming that such commitment is reflected in the security, military and intelligence cooperation between the United States and Israel, the Strategic Dialogue between them, and the level and kind of assistance provided by the United States to Israel;

Taking note of the efforts of Egyptian President Mubarak, particularly the recognition that securing Gaza's border is indispensable to realizing a durable and sustainable end to fighting in Gaza;

Unequivocally condemning all acts, methods, and practices of terrorism as unjustifiable, wherever and by whomever committed and whatever the motivation, in particular, the recent rocket and mortar attacks and other hostile activity perpetrated against Israel from Gaza by terrorist organizations;

Recognizing that suppression of acts of international terrorism, including denying the provision of arms and related materiel to terrorist organizations, is an essential element for the maintenance of international peace and security;

Recognizing that the acquisition and use of arms and related materiel by terrorists against Israel were the direct causes of recent hostilities;

Recognizing the threat to Israel of hostile and terrorist activity from Gaza, including weapons smuggling and the build-up of terrorist capabilities, weapons and infrastructure; and understanding that Israel, like all nations, enjoys the inherent right of self defense, including the right to defend itself against terrorism through appropriate action;

Desiring to improve bilateral, regional and multilateral efforts to prevent the provision of arms and related materiel to terrorist organizations, particularly those currently operating in the Gaza Strip, such as Hamas;

Recognizing that achieving and maintaining a durable and sustainable cessation of hostilities is dependent upon prevention of smuggling and re-supply of weapons into Gaza for Hamas, a
terrorist organization, and other terrorist groups, and affirming that Gaza should not be used as a base from which Israel may be attacked;
Recognizing also that combating weapons and explosives supply to Gaza is a multi-dimensional, results-oriented effort with a regional focus and international components working in parallel, and that this is a priority of the United States’ and Israel’s efforts, independently and with each other, to ensure a durable and sustainable end to hostilities;
Recognizing further the crucial need for the unimpeded, safe and secure provision of humanitarian assistance to the residents of Gaza;
Intending to work with international partners to ensure the enforcement of relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions on counterterrorism in relation to terrorist activity in Gaza;
Have reached the following understandings:
1. The Parties will work cooperatively with neighbors and in parallel with others in the international community to prevent the supply of arms and related materiel to terrorist organizations that threaten either party, with a particular focus on the supply of arms, related materiel and explosives into Gaza to Hamas and other terrorist organizations.
2. The United States will work with regional and NATO partners to address the problem of the supply of arms and related materiel and weapons transfers and shipments to Hamas and other terrorist organizations in Gaza, including through the Mediterranean, Gulf of Aden, Red Sea and eastern Africa, through improvements in existing arrangements or the launching of new initiatives to increase the effectiveness of those arrangements as they relate to the prevention of weapons smuggling to Gaza. Among the tools that will be pursued are:
   • Enhanced U.S. security and intelligence cooperation with regional governments on actions to prevent weapons and explosives flows to Gaza that originate in or transit their territories; including through the involvement of relevant components of the U.S. Government, such as U.S. Central Command, U.S. European Command, U.S. Africa Command, and U.S. Special Operations Command.
   • Enhanced intelligence fusion with key international and coalition naval forces and other appropriate entities to address weapons supply to Gaza;
   • Enhancement of the existing international sanctions and enforcement mechanisms against provision of material support to Hamas and other terrorist organizations, including through an international response to those states, such as Iran, who are determined to be sources of weapons and explosives supply to Gaza.
3. The United States and Israel will assist each other in these efforts through enhanced sharing of information and intelligence that would assist in identifying the origin and routing of weapons being supplied to terrorist organizations in Gaza.
4. The United States will accelerate its efforts to provide logistical and technical assistance and to train and equip regional security forces in counter-smuggling tactics, working towards augmenting its existing assistance programs.

5. The United States will consult and work with its regional partners on expanding international assistance programs to affected communities in order to provide an alternative income/employment to those formerly involved in smuggling.

6. The Parties will establish mechanisms as appropriate for military and intelligence cooperation to share intelligence information and to monitor implementation of the steps undertaken in the context of this Memorandum of Understanding and to recommend additional measures to advance the goals of this Memorandum of Understanding. In so far as military cooperation is concerned, the relevant mechanism will be the United States-Israel Joint Counterterrorism Group, the annual Military to Military discussion, and the Joint Political Military Group.

7. This Memorandum of Understanding of ongoing political commitments between the Parties will be subject to the laws and regulations of the respective parties, as applicable, including those governing the availability of funds and the sharing of information and intelligence. This Memorandum of Understanding was signed on 16 January, 2009 at Washington, in duplicate, in the English language.

FOR ISRAEL: FOR THE UNITED STATES:
Citizens of Israel,

Exactly three weeks ago as the Sabbath ended, we sat here before you – my friend Ehud Barak, the Vice Prime Minister Tzipi Livni and myself – and detailed the considerations and goals which guided us in launching a military operation in the Gaza Strip. Today, we face you again and can say that the conditions have been created so that our targets, as defined when we launched the operation, have been fully achieved, and more so:

- Hamas was badly stricken, both in terms of its military capabilities and in the infrastructure of its regime. Its leaders are in hiding. Many of its members have been killed. The factories in which its missiles were manufactured have been destroyed. The smuggling routes, through dozens of tunnels, have been bombed. The Hamas's capabilities for conveying weapons within the Gaza Strip have been damaged. The scope of missile fire directed at the State of Israel has been reduced. The areas from which most of the missiles were launched are under the control of IDF forces. The estimate of all the security services is that the Hamas's capabilities have been struck a heavy blow which will harm its ability to rule and its military capabilities for some time.

- The IDF and the Israel Security Agency have succeeded in conducting an outstanding operation, utilizing all the elements of Israel's force - on land, at sea and in the air. The military operation was characterized by determination, sophistication, courage and an impressive ability in intelligence and operations, which led to significant and numerous achievements. The current campaign proved again Israel's force and strengthened its deterrence capability vis-à-vis those who threaten us.

- The reserves soldiers, who are the foundation for the IDF’s strength, proved that the spirit of volunteerism and a willingness to sacrifice still very much exist. These forces were made ready in a thorough manner, equipped with all they needed and thus could demonstrate their professionalism and fierceness of spirit.

- During all the days of fighting, the Israeli home front demonstrated its strength, despite hundreds of rockets and mortar shells indiscriminately fired at a population which numbers one million residents; it was the home front that created an unshakable foundation which strengthened us and gave us the ability to continue fighting. Two years
of preparation on the home front proved that we learned our lessons and were properly organized. The Government and the heads of the regional local authorities under attack demonstrated the patience, endurance and that same strong spirit which allowed the political echelon to make the right decisions, knowing that the home front could withstand the consequences of those decisions.

- As a decision-making body, the Government of Israel demonstrated unity with regard to goals, and acted professionally and in coordination to achieve those goals. The decisions were all made in a responsible and educated manner, following clarification and in-depth discussions. As an executive branch, the Government met the demands and needs of the population and the fighting forces.

- Alongside the successes, we must also remember the fallen and those who sacrificed their lives to achieve a better reality in the South. The campaign claimed the lives of three residents of the South and ten of our soldiers. Tonight our hearts are with their families. We send our wishes for a speedy recovery to the residents of the South and to the IDF soldiers injured during the operation.

- Today, and in large part due to the success of the military operation, the entire international community is ready to mobilize in order to achieve maximum stability, and knows that, for this to occur, the process of Hamas’s strengthening must stop. To this end, we reached a number of understandings - the importance of which cannot be underestimated - which will ensure that the strengthening of Hamas will decrease. We formulated understandings with the Egyptian government with regard to a number of central issues, the realization of which will bring about a significant reduction in weapons smuggling from Iran and Syria to the Gaza Strip.

- On Friday we signed a memorandum of understanding with the American government, in the framework of which the United States will mobilize to take the necessary steps, together with the other members of the international community, to prevent weapons smuggling by terrorists in Gaza. I wish to thank and express my great appreciation to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Vice Prime Minister for her efforts to reach this agreement, for her contribution to the diplomatic steps and for the widespread diplomatic effort she made over the past several weeks, which were an important contribution to the international backing given to the Israeli effort against the terrorist organizations headed by Hamas.

- Today I received a letter from the Prime Minister of Great Britain, Gordon Brown, the Prime Minister of Italy, Silvio Berlusconi, the Chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel and the President of France, Nicolas Sarkozy, in which all four expressed their profound commitment to assisting in any way in order to ensure that weapons will not succeed in reaching the murderous terrorist organizations in Gaza.
I have no doubt that were it not for the determined and successful military action, we would not have reached diplomatic understandings, which together create a full picture of impressive accomplishment.

Citizens of Israel,

The Government decided to launch the operation in Gaza only after long thought and great consideration, and only after all attempts through other means to stop the firing and other acts of terror by Hamas failed. Israel, which withdrew from the Gaza Strip to the last millimeter at the end of 2005 – with no intention of returning – found itself under a barrage of missiles. Hamas violently took control of the Gaza Strip and began attacking the communities in the South more intensely. Hamas's methods are incomprehensible. It placed its military system in crowded residential neighborhoods, operated among a civilian population which served as a human shield and operated under the aegis of mosques, schools and hospitals, while making the Palestinian population a hostage to its terrorist activities, with the understanding that Israel – as a country with supreme values – would not act. The external Hamas leadership, which lives in comfort and quiet, continued to set extremist policies while ignoring the population’s ongoing suffering and out of a conspicuous unwillingness to ease its situation.

Hamas in Gaza was built by Iran as a foundation for power, and is backed through funding, through training and through the provision of advanced weapons. Iran, which strives for regional hegemony, tried to replicate the methods used by Hezbollah in Lebanon in the Gaza Strip as well. Iran and Hamas mistook the restraint Israel exercised as weakness. They were mistaken. They were surprised.

The State of Israel has proven to them that restraint is an expression of strength which was exercised in a determined and sophisticated manner when that which we had avoided became unavoidable.

During the operation, the State of Israel demonstrated great sensitivity in exercising its force in order to avoid, as much as possible, harming the civilian population not involved in terror. In cases where there was any doubt that striking at terrorists would lead to harming an innocent civilian population – we abstained from acting. There are not many countries which would act thusly.

We have no disagreement with the residents of Gaza. We consider the Gaza Strip a part of the future Palestinian state with which we hope to live a life of good neighborliness, and we wish for the day when the vision of two states is realized.

During the operation, we made widespread and concerted efforts to see to the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian population. We allowed for the transfer of equipment, food and medicine to prevent a humanitarian crisis. In addition, I appointed Minister Isaac Herzog, the Minister of Social Welfare and Social Affairs, to head up this effort, and tonight the Cabinet instructed him to invest all his efforts in preparing a comprehensive plan so that in the next
few days, we will be able to provide an appropriate and comprehensive answer to the civilian population’s needs in the Gaza Strip. I wish to express my great appreciation to the international organizations which acted and continue to act tirelessly to assist us in providing the Palestinian population with appropriate living conditions. Israel will continue to cooperate with them, especially in the coming days and weeks on behalf of the Gazan population.

Citizens of Israel,

Today, before the Government meeting, I spoke with the President of Egypt, Hosni Mubarak, who presented Egypt’s initiative to me, along with his request for a ceasefire. I thanked the President for Egypt’s commitment to finding a solution to this crisis and for the important role it plays in the Middle East. I presented the President’s statement to the Cabinet, along with the totality of our achievements in the operation, as well as the completion of the goals. The Cabinet decided to accept my proposal to declare a ceasefire.

Beginning at 2:00 a.m., Israel will cease its actions against the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip and will remain deployed in the Gaza Strip and its environs.

It must be remembered that Hamas is not part of the arrangements we came to. These are agreements involving many countries, and a terrorist organization like Hamas is not and need not be a part of them. If our enemies decide that the blows they have already suffered are not enough and they wish to continue fighting, Israel will be ready for that scenario and will feel free to continue responding with force.

Hamas was surprised a number of times during the past several weeks. It did not predict the State of Israel’s determination or the seriousness of its intentions to bring about a change in the reality in the region. Hamas’s leaders did not believe that the State of Israel would launch a military operation on such a scale on the eve of elections; it did not predict the force of the military attack and moreover – it did not predict the outcome.

Hamas still does not fully appreciate the difficult blow it received. If Hamas decides to continue its wild terrorist attacks, it may find itself surprised again by the State of Israel’s determination. I do not suggest that it or any other terrorist organization test us.

This statement tonight would be incomplete if I did not mention the kidnapped soldier, Gilad Schalit. One hundred meters from here, there is a demonstration for his release, and I respect each and every one of the participants. The intensive efforts to secure Gilad’s release began long before the operation, continued during it and will continue after as well. The Government of Israel is working on many levels to bring him home, and during the operation we carried out various actions to bring us closer to this goal. Due to the sensitivity of the matter, I will not go into detail. I will only say that Gilad is at the top of our agenda, and we do not need any prodding or reminding in this matter. I am hopeful tonight as well that we will soon see him in his family’s embrace.

On a personal note:
For weeks I have been watching the people of Israel day and night as we make the unprecedented effort to fight for and realize our right of self-defense. I saw the brave soldiers, our dear and beloved sons; I saw their commanders and the spirit which buoyed them; I saw the residents of the South, their fierce spirit; and the leadership of the mayors who took care to provide for the needs of their residents; I also saw the actions of the Home Front Command, which quietly and efficiently coordinated the assistance campaign for the southern region; and I heard the bereaved families.

Dear families, the things you said, the pain you expressed, the fierce spirit you demonstrated – these are the foundation for the people of Israel's strength. On behalf of the entire nation, on behalf of the Government of Israel, I share your profound pain and thank you for the encouragement, the strength and the inspiration your strong stance has granted the entire nation.

I also wish to say something to the people of Gaza: even before the military operation began, and during it, I appealed to you. We do not hate you; we did not want and do not want to harm you. We wanted to defend our children, their parents, their families. We feel the pain of every Palestinian child and family member who fell victim to the cruel reality created by Hamas which transformed you into victims.

Your suffering is terrible. Your cries of pain touch each of our hearts. On behalf of the Government of Israel, I wish to convey my regret for the harming of uninvolved civilians, for the pain we caused them, for the suffering they and their families suffered as a result of the intolerable situation created by Hamas.

The understandings we reached with Egypt, the international backing of the United States and the European countries – all these do not ensure that the firing by Hamas will stop. If it completely stops - the IDF will consider withdrawing from Gaza at a time which it deems right. If not, the IDF will continue to act in defense of our residents.

This is the time to convey our appreciation and gratitude, first and foremost to you, Mr. Minister of Defense, for your work, for the tremendous effort you made, for your skill, professionalism and the understanding you demonstrated throughout the operation – thank you very much. I wish to thank the soldiers of the IDF, their commanders, the Head of the Southern Command Yoav Galant, and the Chief of General Staff Gabi Ashkenazi; to the Israel Security Agency, its fighters and its head, Yuval Diskin; to the Mossad and its hidden fighters, headed by Meir Dagan; to the Israel Police and the emergency services, Magen David Adom and the Fire Department.

Blessed is the nation with such an army and such security and rescue services.

I wish to express my hope that tonight the first step towards a different reality, one of security and quiet for the residents of Israel, will be taken. From the bottom of my heart, I thank the people of Israel, its fighters and their commanders for the fierceness of spirit and the social solidarity they demonstrated over these past weeks.
This is the secret of our strength – it is the foundation for our power and it is the hope of our future.
Thank you.
As of 2:00 a.m. tonight, we will hold our fire in the Gaza Strip. In three weeks of fighting, we have achieved the goals we set when we launched Operation Cast Lead.

In view of the exceptional operational results and the achievement of the Israel Defense Forces' objectives, in light of the far-reaching understandings reached with the Egyptians regarding the fight against the arms smuggling, considering the humanitarian needs that are growing stronger in the Gaza Strip, and with the intention of facilitating other processes to enhance the achievements, Israel is accepting the Egyptian request to hold fire. However, we will continue to maintain the preparedness of our forces for any developments.

I can state clearly here: we have achieved our military objectives. But I do not want to mislead anyone. While we are holding our fire, there is no absolute certainty; Hamas may continue firing at our forces and at the home front. I have instructed the IDF to be ready for any such development. The army will remain deployed in Gaza according to operational considerations. If Hamas continues to fire, we will respond harshly and are prepared to continue and even expand the operation if needed. Civilians in the rear must also be prepared and cautious until we see what happens.

We did not go into battle with cries of joy or with any pretensions. Anyone who has been through a day of battle knows the compelling responsibility. I have been in more than a few wars, I have led many under my command into the field of battle, I have buried many of my comrades in arms. And I know the truth of our lives and our struggle here. We go into battle when we must. We set realistic goals and prepare meticulously, and we fight with all the power required. With determination, but also with responsibility and discretion. That is what we do. That is what we have done in Gaza.

That is just such an operation. Within its delineated scope, this is a justified elective war. There is a limit to patience. Eight years of civilians being targeted, with one single goal: to kill men, women and children; hostile actions designed to kill or kidnap soldiers.

Restraint did not help. Neither did the Disengagement, with all its harsh repercussions in our internal affairs. In the end, Hamas took control of half of the Palestinian population, in the Gaza Strip, and used them cynically, sometimes even cruelly. It turned the people into hostages, their homes into sites for launching missiles and rockets into the hearts of our cities and villages.

---

3 Translation provided courtesy of the Israeli Foreign Ministry.
We prepared our army and security forces for many months. We did not overlook a single detail. When we embarked on the operation, we did what we had to do. The citizens of Israel saw the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in their full power: the Air Force with the first strike, and then the intelligence and security forces did their jobs with unparalleled professionalism and precision. After that we transitioned to a ground assault with extraordinary coordination among the infantry, armored corps, marine and air forces, special units, and all branches of the armed forces – the IDF at its best.

The IDF in conjunction with the Israel Security Agency (ISA) have dealt Hamas a harsh and painful blow. The achievements are better than we projected before embarking on the operation, and they were achieved rapidly. All IDF forces were well trained for the action, during which they showed determination and strong operational capabilities. During the fighting, IDF forces bisected the Gaza Strip, surrounded Gaza City and entered several neighborhoods in which Hamas activists were hiding. About 1,200 Palestinians were killed, including hundreds of Hamas operatives and some of their senior leaders.

We are filled with appreciation for the IDF soldiers and officers at all levels, from the soldiers in the field to the OC Southern Command, Yoav Galant, and have great esteem for ISA director Yuval Diskin and his people. And to Chief of Staff Gabi Ashkenazi I will say only this: I, Lt. Gen. (Res.) Ehud Barak salute you.

We lost ten soldiers and officers in the fighting:
Warrant Officer Lutfi Nasraladin
Staff Sgt Dvir Emanuelof
Cpl. Yousef Muadi
Staff Sgt. Nitai Stern
Maj. Dagan Wartman
Capt. Yehonatan Netanel
Staff Sgt. Alexander Mashvitzky
Maj. Roi Rosner
Sgt Amit Robinson
Capt. Omer Rabinovitch

Three civilians were killed:
Beber Vaknin of Netivot
Irit Sheetrit of Ashdod
Hani al-Mahdi of Aroar

In dry military language, we can say that the operation was conducted with a relatively low casualty rate, less than we originally estimated. But there is no such thing as a relatively low toll and we do not speak of the fallen in terms of cost. Each one of them was a world onto itself. Each one of them has a family whose world has been destroyed. I share the grief of
the bereaved families and from here I send them condolences from the bottom of my heart and from the depth of my understanding of the enormity of their emptiness and loss. To the wounded, I would like to send best wishes for a speedy recovery, encouragement and an embrace.

This was an operation in which many Palestinian civilians were hurt and a lot of damage was caused to the fabric of life and the property of the residents of the Gaza Strip. We did everything possible to minimize the damage to the civilian population. We did not come to fight the Gazan people. We came to strike a crushing blow at Hamas.

If Hamas were sensitive to its own people, if it did not act with murderous cynicism and hide behind men, women and children as its human shield, much of the damage to the civilians could have been avoided.

We are not indifferent to the humanitarian damage. During the fighting, we made a quarter of a million telephone calls and distributed flyers to the residents advising them to leave the firing zones. I do not know of any army in the world that acts with the standards of the IDF. We did all we could to send supplies and aid to the Palestinian citizens. We established a special team to handle humanitarian aid and we will now do everything we can to strengthen the effort, to provide medical assistance and any other aid required to rehabilitate the residents.

This is Israel's finest hour. It was a time of trial in which our society showed itself to be ready and willing, with the ability to cope and to draw on the enormous strength within it. Israeli society rose impressively to the occasion and emerges from this trial strengthened and empowered on all fronts:

On the military front we have returned to an IDF at its finest: soldiers who know how to fight and do so courageously, out of deep conviction in the justice of this course of action, and with great skill.

Officers of all levels who know how to give the very simple and very difficult command “Follow me!” Even after they have been wounded, they insist on returning to the battlefield to lead their soldiers and to set a personal example for them.

The families of the soldiers, who bit their lips and passed sleepless nights, but whose concern did not cause them for one moment to weaken the resolve of the fighters. To the contrary - they encouraged and inspired them.

And this was the Home Front's finest hour. The Home Front was prepared for this difficult test and met it with heartwarming self-assurance. The local leadership took responsibility and led the public in the southern cities and towns in an admirable manner. It was a determined Home Front, whose patience and courage constantly bolstered the IDF soldiers and us, the decision makers. Men, women and children, old and young, showed extraordinary resilience in the face of the difficulties and dangers that were an integral part of the operation, and
their good spirits took us back to the good old days of steadfastness, unity, and resoluteness. These strengths will accompany us in the trials that lie ahead.

The Defense Ministry, the Home Front Command, the government ministries, all the government authorities, and the rescue services acted effectively to minimize the suffering and anxiety of the people who sustained volleys of dozens of missiles and rockets each day. The civilians gave us strength. Their resilience and high morale, the way they coped with difficulties, and their ability to function under fire took us back to the good old values, to the good and beautiful Israel that we missed so much.

IDF forces are deployed in the Gaza Strip with the aim of ensuring that the firing will not resume and in a way that will enable us to give an immediate and appropriate response if it does. We are determined to achieve all the goals we set for ourselves at the beginning of the fighting. And one more thing must be said, as strongly as possible: Gilad Shalit. We are doing everything possible so that we will be able to see Gilad home again. I do not have any news yet, but I promise you: this is a supreme effort. There will not be a single moment when we are not focused on him. The IDF has an unwritten pact with the parents who send their sons to war, and we will not violate it. Everything that can and should be done will be done in time so that we will see Gilad Shalit safe and sound back home.

I would like to thank you wholeheartedly, Mr. Prime Minister, Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, and all our partners in the country’s leadership for the coordinated and successful management of this difficult operation. Ehud, you deserve our gratitude, and I am sure that I speak for many in our nation.

If anybody had any doubts, those doubts no longer exist: we will not capitulate to Hamas, we will not let it rampage. I would be glad to announce here that there will be no more war, but Hamas, Hizbullah, Syria, Iran, and fanatic and extremist elements around the world are still plotting evil. They will continue to test us, and we must be prepared. We are endeavoring to end this round and are doing everything to combine military capability with a complementary diplomatic effort. We will do so in the future as well. We will do everything possible so that every Israeli citizen will have what any citizen in the world deserves: peace and quiet.
Musa Abu Marzuq announces Hamas’s agreement to a ceasefire: “We, the factions of the Palestinian resistance, announce a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip…” (Al-Arabiya TV, 1400 hours, January 18, 2009).

IDF soldiers leave the Gaza Strip after Israel announced it would hold its fire (Jerry Lampen for Reuters, January 18, 2009).
The Situation on the Ground

Overview

On January 18 at 0200 hours, a unilateral cease-fire went into effect as Israel held its fire. On January 19, IDF forces began exiting the Gaza Strip. Some of the forces remained in place in commanding positions, especially around the areas in the northern Gaza Strip from which rockets were launched.

During the afternoon of January 18, Hamas and the other Palestinian terrorist organizations announced they were ceasing their fire in the Gaza Strip. In its announcement Hamas demanded a withdrawal of IDF forces from the Gaza Strip within one week, and a simultaneous opening of the crossings for the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Gazans. Even after the announcement, rocket fire continued on January 18. As of 1700 hours, January 19, the arena has remained quiet, for the first time since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead.

The situation on the ground since Israel has held its fire

IDF forces have been redeployed since the shooting stopped and have not carried out any offensive action. Some of the forces began leaving the Gaza Strip on January 18. The Israeli Air Force does not carry out offensive attacks and has only struck points from which rockets were launched at Israel, including after the ceasefire. The main events of January 18 were the following:

- The Israeli Air Force attacked a launching point from which a Grad rocket was fired at the city of Kiryat Gat. The strike was identified as successful.
- The Israeli Air Force attacked a terrorist squad which launched a rocket at the city of Sderot. The strike was identified as successful.
- During the morning terrorists opened fire on an IDF force in the northern Gaza Strip. The source of the fire was identified and armored vehicles and aircraft attacked the terrorists. No Israeli casualties were sustained.

In a shooting incident which took place after the ceasefire, the Israeli Air Force identified a rocket launcher which had been used to fire at Israel. It was positioned between two school buildings in the Saja‘iya neighborhood in the eastern part of Gaza City. The air force did not attack the launcher because of its proximity to the school buildings.

Click for Video
Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire into Israeli Territory

Although Israel announced it was holding its fire, on January 18 rocket and mortar shell fire continued into Israeli territory. Sixteen rocket and two mortar shell hits were identified. Six rockets and one mortar shell fell in the on January 18 after Hamas announced all the terrorist organizations had agreed to a ceasefire.

At approximately 0915 hours on the morning of January 18, a barrage of six rockets was fired at the city of Sderot. There were no casualties and no property damage was reported. At 1404 hours a long-range rocket hit a house in the city of Ashdod. Two civilians were seriously wounded, two sustained minor injuries and three were treated for shock. The house suffered extensive damage. On January 19, as of 1700 hours, the arena has remained quiet, for the first time since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead.

A rocket hit in Ashdod (Photo: Edi Israel, used courtesy of NRG, January 18, 2009).
Rockets and Mortar Shells Fired at Israel during Operation Cast Lead

Israel

On January 18, humanitarian aid continued to be delivered from Israel into the Gaza Strip, in greater volume than on previous days. **Forty trucks** passed through the Karni crossing and **92** through the Kerem Shalom crossing. In addition, **60,000 liters of diesel fuel** were delivered for Gaza’s power plant. Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead **approximately 1,500 trucks** delivering humanitarian aid have entered the Gaza Strip. The Erez crossing was open for Palestinians with urgent humanitarian problems, and eight correspondents used it to enter the Gaza Strip.

Egypt and other countries

On January 18 wounded Palestinians continued crossing into Egypt through the Rafah crossing and doctors from various countries entered the Gaza Strip to help in hospitals. Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead, several hundred sick and wounded Palestinians left the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing for Egypt. Some of them were transferred to other Arab and Western countries for medical treatment (Middle East News Agency, January 18, 2009).
Humanitarian aid continues being delivered into the Gaza Strip through Israel and Egypt via the Rafah crossing: on January 18, ten tons of medical equipment and 13 ambulances entered. Al-Jazeera TV reported that the Egyptian authorities refused to set up a field hospital for wounded Palestinians in Rafah or El-Arish, despite the fact that various countries had sent Egypt suitable equipment (Al-Jazeera TV, January 18, 2009).

Various countries continue contributing funds to aid and rehabilitate the Gaza Strip. The British minister for international development said that Britain would donate £20 million in addition to the aid it had already given. He added that the unilateral ceasefire made it possible to use the money for food, water and shelter for the Palestinians (Ma’an News Agency, January 18, 2009).

The Iranian ship with its cargo of humanitarian aid which was prevented by the Israeli Navy from reaching the Gaza shore is anchored in international waters near Egypt. Its captain expressed hope that negotiations between the Iranian consul in Egypt and senior Egyptians would make it possible to deliver the aid through one of Egyptian’s ports or to Gaza (Press TV website, January 18).

The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip

On January 18, as IDF forces began a gradual withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, Palestinian civilians began showing the first signs of returning to their routine lives. Some of those who had left their houses during the fighting began returning. Al-Arabiya TV described Gazans leaving their houses to see what had happened to Gaza City, and Palestinians went to hospitals to visit the wounded (Al-Arabiya TV, January 18, 2009). After three weeks, Gazan banks are expected to reopen on January 19 (Ramattan News Agency, January 18, 2009).

Palestinian sources in the Gaza Strip reported 1,300 dead and more than 5,400 wounded. They also reported the evacuation of dozens of bodies found after the ceasefire. The Palestinian media make no mention of the hundreds of operatives belonging to Hamas and the other terrorist organizations who were killed, part of Hamas’s propaganda effort to paint the false picture that Israel killed only civilians during the operation.
In his opening speech at the summit meeting at Sharm el-Sheikh, Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak said that Egypt’s primary objectives were to guarantee the ceasefire, remove the IDF forces from the Gaza Strip, institute a new lull arrangement and open the Gaza Strip crossings. He appealed to the international community, asking for their cooperation and support of Egypt’s efforts to ensure its objectives, and moreover, to put the peace process in motion (Al-Arabiya TV, January 18, 2009). He also reiterated that Egypt would not agree to the deployment of an international force on its territory.

The world leaders who participated in the conference (among them the German chancellor, the Czech prime minister, the UN secretary general, the king of Jordan, the British prime minister and the presidents of Egypt and France) expressed their support for implementing the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. They also called for Hamas to stop firing rockets and mortar shells into Israeli territory and expressed their hope that the next phases of the arrangement would include the withdrawal of IDF forces and the opening of the crossings. French president Nicholas Sarkozy expressed his support for Israel, saying it had the right to defend itself. The British prime minister said that Britain, France and Germany would cooperate to prevent weapons from being smuggled into the Gaza Strip. The Italian prime minister proposed sending Italian forces to the Gaza Strip to oversee the border crossings.
Talks with Hamas representatives

The Hamas delegation left Cairo for Damascus after two days of talks about the Egyptian initiative. The five-man delegation headed by Muhammad Nasr, a member of Hamas's political bureau, deliberated with senior Egyptian officials about developments following the Israel announcement that it would hold its fire. The talks also dealt with the implications of the Israeli attacks and the way Israel would withdraw from the Gaza Strip (Kuwaiti News Agency, January 18, 2009).

A spokesman for the Egyptian foreign minister said that Egypt had invited Israel and the Palestinian organizations to Cairo for separate talks with Egypt. He said the objective of the talks was to discuss the steps necessary for bolstering the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and to agree on a series of steps to implement the Egyptian initiative, including lifting the siege and opening the crossings (Middle East News Agency, January 18, 2009).

Economic summit meeting in Kuwait

Hosni Mubarak, in his opening speech at the Arab economic summit meeting in Kuwait, again discussed the details of the Egyptian initiative for a ceasefire. He said that Egypt's most important goal was to put the peace process in motion immediately and in a serious way (Middle East News Agency, January 18, 2009).

Summit meeting participants discussed a proposal to support the Egyptian initiative for an arrangement in the Gaza Strip. They said that they considered the initiative one of the ways to complement UN Security Council 1860. The proposal is supposed to stress the need to work to open the crossings according to the agreement of 2005. It also calls for an reexamination of the ties with Israel and the implementation of a decision to impose economic sanctions on Israel in a way that will serve the Palestinian people “as long as Israel continues its aggression in the Gaza Strip” (Middle East News Agency, January 18, 2009).

Hamas contests Mahmoud Abbas’s legitimacy as president of the Palestinian Authority

Immediately after announcing its ceasefire, Hamas rushed back to the mudslinging of the internal Palestinian arena, putting the legitimacy of Mahmoud Abbas as Palestinian Authority president back on the agenda. As far as Hamas is concerned, his term of office ended on January 9, 2009, but because of having to focus on the fighting in the Gaza Strip, Hamas preferred to not to deal with the issue. Faraj al-Ghoul, justice minister in the Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip, said that all actions taken by “former president
Mahmoud Abbas” and the commitments he made did not obligate the Palestinian people. Al-Ghoul demanded that Mahmoud Abbas be investigated and tried for his “crimes” (Al-Bayan Center website, January 18, 2009).

**Bashar Assad delivers belligerent speech**

- Syrian president Bashar Assad delivered a belligerent, anti-Israeli speech with anti-Semitism motifs at the Arab summit meeting in Doha on January 16. His main points were the following (Al-Jazeera TV, January 16, 2009):

  - Israel has based its existence on slaughter, robbery and destruction, and the premise of its future is genocide. Israel is an enemy which understands only the language of bloodshed. The Israeli aggression in the Gaza Strip is not only a response to rocket fire but a link in a chain of steps toward the establishment of a purely Jewish state from which anyone who is not Jewish will be expelled or destroyed.

  - The Arab countries must stand at the side of the residents of Gaza and the “resistance” [i.e., the terrorist organizations]. The Israeli leaders should be tried so that history will record that they are “racists more dangerous than the Nazis in modern history.”

  - Israel will never return the land and “rights” of the Arabs unless it is forced to. Therefore, “restoring territory and rights” is the essence of the “resistance” [i.e. terrorism] and it is the way to achieve peace.

  - Israel has not learned the lessons of history, because “he who has no land has no history.” Thus there will be no compromise, no surrender and no withdrawal, and in the end peace will be achieved by force.

  - **The Arab peace initiative is dead.** All the Arab countries must sever relations with Israel, close Israel’s embassies and impose a boycott on it.

  - Israel’s “war crimes” will give birth to fiercer hatred for Israel in coming generations. For every Arab child killed in the Gaza Strip, dozens of “resistance” [activists] will be born who will hate Israel.
Operation Cast Lead-Update No. 18

A Hamas “victory production:” Palestinians demonstrate support for Hamas on the ruins of the house of senior terrorist operative Nizar Rayyan, killed by the Israeli Air Force in Jabaliya (Photo: Jerry Lampen for Reuters, January 20, 2009).

1 This is the last of the daily updates which have appeared since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead. Updates will now appear in their weekly form (every Tuesday in the Hebrew version) and Information Bulletins will appear according to events and circumstances. We will continue issuing Bulletins illustrating the use the terrorist organizations make of civilians as human shields based on the large amount of information received during the fighting.
Overview

- On January 19, for the first time since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead, the south of Israel was quiet, both on the fighting front in the Gaza Strip and in the cities, towns and villages around it. IDF forces continue holding commanding positions, especially in rocket launching zones, after having redeployed at the end of the fighting. On the afternoon of January 20 the calm was broken by two shooting events in which IDF forces were attacked. (Note: On the morning of January 21, the last IDF soldier left the Gaza Strip).

- Life in the Gaza Strip has begun to return to normal. In view of the extent of the destruction and losses, Hamas has made an effort to produce a “victory” narrative, issuing fabricated statements about IDF losses and “events” during the fighting which never took place. In the south of Israel, in the cities, towns and villages within rocket range of the Gaza Strip, life has also begun to return to normal. Almost all the children in kindergartens and schools have gone back to their studies, and commerce has resumed.

The situation on the ground

- On January 19 no events were recorded in the Gaza Strip. Most of the IDF forces continue to withdraw (the withdrawal was completed on January 21). The remaining forces have been redeployed in positions commanding the zones from which rockets were fired into Israeli territory. The Israeli Air Force has abstained from attacking for the first time since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead (on January 18 Israeli aircraft attacked rocket launchers from which rockets were fired after the ceasefire).

- On January 20 (as of 1500 hours), the ceasefire was violated when terrorists opened fire on an IDF force near the border security fence south of the Kissufim crossing. Forty minutes later, armed Palestinians shot at an IDF force in the central Gaza Strip. The force returned fire. In both instances there were no casualties (Ynet, January 20).

Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire into Israeli Territory

- During January 19 there was neither rocket nor mortar shell fire into Israel, making it possible for the residents of the south to gradually return to their routine lives. The schools began teaching again and factories and businesses returned to normal operation.

During Operation Cast Lead (December 27, 2008 to January 18, 2009), **571 rockets and 205 mortar shells** landed in Israeli territory. The fire killed **four** people (three civilians and one soldier), wounded **16** seriously to critically, and **351** sustained minor injuries. In addition, several hundred were treated for shock.
Rockets and Mortar Shells Fired at Israel Since Israel Began Holding its Fire

In Judea and Samaria there was an increase in various types of terrorist attacks on January 19. The main incidents were the following:

- **A shooting attack was carried out in the Benjamin district**: An Israeli civilian was critically wounded after having been shot in the upper part of his body in a drive-by shooting near the settlement of Kochav Hashahar, east of Ramallah. His wife was not harmed and the two managed to reach the settlement. A helicopter evacuated the wounded man to a hospital and IDF forces searched the area for the terrorists.

- **A Molotov cocktail** was thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Bethlehem. There were no casualties and no damage was done to the car. IDF forces searched the area and detained two Palestinians who had been involved in throwing Molotov cocktails in the past.

- **Stones** were thrown at an Israeli bus near the Hawara checkpoint south of Nablus. There were no casualties and no damage was done to the bus.
Humanitarian Aid Delivered to the Gaza Strip

Israel

On January 19, the delivery of humanitarian aid continued through the crossings from Israel into the Gaza Strip:

- 195 trucks carrying 5,000 tons of aid from international agencies and donations from Jordan and Egypt were delivered through the Kerem Shalom and Karni crossings. A road was paved at the Kerem Shalom crossing making it possible to deliver goods directly from Egypt into the Gaza Strip. On January 19, ten trucks passed through with 200 tons of flour.
- About 540,000 liters of diesel fuel and 200 tons of cooking gas were delivered through the Nahal Oz fuel terminal.
- Ten ambulances from Judea and Samaria went into the Gaza Strip in coordination with the Red Cross.
- 33 Palestinians left the Gaza Strip through the Erez crossing for medical treatment in Israel.

Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead, approximately 1,700 trucks carrying 42,000 tons of humanitarian aid crossed into the Gaza Strip. In addition, more than 2,200,000 liters of fuel were delivered through the Nahal Oz fuel terminal and the Kerem Shalom crossing.

The Rafah crossing

On January 19, 75 wounded Palestinians went through the Rafah crossing to receive medical treatment in Egypt. In addition, dozens of doctors, media correspondents and pro-Palestinian activists entered the Gaza Strip. Humanitarian aid continues to be delivered from Egypt through the Rafah crossing. Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead, more than 4,500 units of blood have been delivered. On January 19, 2,500 more units of blood were supposed to have been delivered (Al-Yawm Al-Sabaa, January 19, 2009).
Hamas continues to confiscate the humanitarian aid entering the Gaza Strip. Hamas also prevents wounded Palestinians from reaching the Erez crossing for medical treatment in the field hospital set up there by Israel, and instead sends them through the Rafah crossing for treatment in Egypt.

The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip

- The return to normal continues in the Gaza Strip. Families which fled from battle zones are returning to their houses, traffic on the roads has increased, and businesses are reopening. UNRWA reported that 50,000 Gazans are still sheltered in its facilities because their houses were damaged during the fighting. Gazans appealed to the Hamas police to deal with the situation, complaining that damaged houses were being looted (Al-Aqsa Radio, January 19). In addition, two children were reported killed on January 19 when they played with a mine laid by Hamas operatives to booby-trap a building.

- According to reports from the Palestinian central statistics bureau, during the fighting 22,000 buildings were damaged, 4,100 of them completely destroyed. The bureau estimated the damage done to the Gaza Strip at $1.9 billion. Muhammad Hasouna, minister of national economy in the Gaza Strip, estimated the damage at $3 billion dollars.

Fatah activists oppressed by Hamas

- During and after the fighting, Hamas imposed its authority on the residents of the Gaza Strip while oppressing Fatah activists. On January 19, a rise was reported in the number of Fatah activists shot by Hamas operatives, especially those shot in the legs. Since the ceasefire went into effect, several dozen Fatah activists have been wounded. It was also reported that Fatah activists were abducted by Hamas and are being held captive in improvised jails.
Hamas produces the narrative of its “victory”

Following Ismail Haniya’s declaration of “victory,” Abu Obedia, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades spokesman, delivered his own “victory speech,” trying to paint the false picture that Hamas “won” the war. He made the completely untrue claim that 80 Israel soldiers had been killed, 49 of them in direct combat with Hamas operatives (Note: Ten Israeli soldiers were killed, four of them by friendly fire and one by a mortar shell. In addition, three civilians were killed by rocket fire). He also boasted of fictitious military achievements, such as the downing of helicopters, the abduction of IDF soldiers and attacks within Israel² (Al-Aqsa TV, January 19, 2009).

Egypt

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak delivered a speech at the opening of the Kuwait economic summit in which he said that the fighting in the Gaza Strip had exposed many of the problems existing in the Arab world, especially its factionalism. He said that Egypt respected the “Palestinian resistance” [i.e., terrorist organizations], but that it should have shown responsibility for its people when it decided to go to war. He added that Egypt would make every effort to bring about an Israeli withdrawal, ensure the opening of the crossings and bring about an internal Palestinian reconciliation (Al-Jazeera TV, January 19, 2009).

² Hamas’s efforts to produce a “victory story” will be analyzed in a separate Bulletin which will appear shortly.
The Palestinian Authority and the terrorist organizations

- Mahmoud Abbas delivered a speech at the Kuwait summit in which he abstained from criticizing Hamas, but rather said he supported the Egyptian initiative as the only solution for the problems of the so-called siege and the opening of the crossings. However, he did criticize the radical policies which encouraged the Gazans to fight. He called on all the Palestinian organizations to rise about their internal conflicts and coordinate their positions for a joint meeting in Egypt (Wafa News Agency, January 19, 2009).

- Salam Fayyad, prime minister of the Palestinian Authority, said that he was afraid the mechanism for delivering international aid for the rehabilitation of the Gaza Strip would widen the political rift between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas. He said a distinction had to be made between aid for humanitarian needs (which, by implication, would be delivered directly to the Gaza Strip) and support for rehabilitating the Gaza Strip, which had to be in the hands of the Palestinian Authority (Reuters, January 18, 2009).

- Meeting with the media, Salam Fayyad described the operation in the Gaza Strip as “an unprecedented shedding of blood.” He said that Israel had broken international law and all the international humanitarian conventions. He also called for the Egyptian initiative to be acted on and for a national unity government to be established as a foundation for resolving the internal Palestinian conflict. He said that such a government, composed of 25 authorized Palestinian representatives, would be able to renew unity (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, January 19, 2009).

Iran

- Ali Moutahari, delegate to the Iranian parliament, claimed that as a result of “negative Zionist propaganda,” the Muslim countries abstained from sending aid to Hamas. In his opinion, that was the reason Iran should openly send Hamas military aid, and even publicly
say “We must not work secretly to send arms to the legal Hamas government.” He also called for protests and for diplomatic steps to be taken against the Islamic countries (Asr website, Iran, January 19, 2009).