



**Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center  
at the Israel Intelligence Heritage  
& Commemoration Center (IICC)**

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**Civilians as human shields: additional evidence  
from various sources demonstrating the use  
made by Hamas of civilian houses for military  
purposes during Operation Cast Lead –  
file no. 5**

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1. What follows is evidence from various sources – photographs, aerial imagery, air strike footage, prisoner interrogations, and a seized document – clearly showing how Hamas and other terrorist organizations **made use of civilian houses for military purposes** during Operation Cast Lead. The houses were used as laboratories for weapons production, arms storehouses, booby-trapped areas designed to hit any IDF soldiers entering them, and safe houses for terrorist operatives.<sup>1</sup> IDF soldiers were fired upon from residential buildings. In addition, rockets and mortar shells were fired from residential areas.

2. In target-specific air strikes on terrorist sites during Operation Cast Lead, the Israeli Air Force cameras frequently caught massive **secondary explosions**, demonstrating the significant quantities of weapons and explosives stored in residential buildings. There is no doubt that by placing the weapons and explosives at the heart of residential neighborhoods and using them as rocket launch sites, **Hamas knowingly risked** the lives of local civilians.

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<sup>1</sup>See our Information Bulletin: ["Civilians as Human Shields: Operational sketches seized during Operation Cast Lead show Hamas locates firing positions, anti-tank positions and IEDs in military compounds situated in the heart of densely-populated neighborhoods in the northern Gaza Strip"](#) (January 19, 2009).

3. The use of residential buildings inside densely populated neighborhoods for a variety of military targets was designed to inflict casualties upon the IDF and diminish the vulnerability of terrorist operatives of Hamas and other organizations during the fighting, knowing that Israel takes great care to avoid hitting civilians as much as possible. During the operation, the IDF was exposed to the problems involved in fighting terrorists operating from residential houses, assisted by civilians (including women and children) and sometimes dressed in civilian clothing (making it more difficult to distinguish between them and non-combatant civilians).

4. The present document contains evidence of the use of civilian houses for military purposes during Operation Cast Lead, divided into the following categories:<sup>2</sup>

- a. Photographs showing the use of residential buildings for military purposes: booby-trapped houses and houses used for storing and manufacturing weapons and ammunition.
- b. Photographs documenting rocket and mortar shell launches in the vicinity of residential buildings.
- c. Aerial photographs of rocket, anti-tank, and small arms fire from inside and in the vicinity of residential buildings.
- d. Israeli Air Force air strike footage showing the use of residential buildings for military purposes: anti-aircraft, rocket, and mortar shell fire, as well as storing arms and ammunition.
- e. Information gathered from Hamas operatives apprehended by the IDF about the use of civilian houses for military purposes (launching rockets, storing weapons, hiding terrorist operatives).
- f. A seized document--a note left in a residential building by Hamas operatives who used the house for military purposes.

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<sup>2</sup> Air strike footage and photographs courtesy of the IDF Spokesman and the Israeli Air Force.

## Using residential buildings for military purposes

### Booby-trapped residential building



Booby-trapped residential building



Explosive-filled dummy in a residential building



Explosives found in a residential building



Booby-trapped residential building



Booby-trapped residential building

**Storage of arms and ammunition in residential buildings**



Rocket found in a residential building



IED found in a residential building



Storage of rockets in a residential building



Arms and ammunition found in the houses of Hamas operatives (IDF Spokesman, January 15)

### Manufacturing arms and ammunition in residential buildings



Rockets manufactured in a residential building. The photographs show bags, including a bag of table salt (with Hebrew writing) used for manufacturing explosives.

### Rocket and mortar shell launches in the vicinity of residential buildings



## Aerial photographs from Operation Cast Lead showing weapons fired from inside and in the vicinity of residential buildings



Anti-aircraft cannon positioned on the roof of a residential building and covered with a camouflage net (January 6, 2009)



Rocket launcher situated between two residential buildings (January 6, 2009)



Underground pit for launching rockets dug out in a residential area




Terrorist shooting at IDF forces from the windows of residential buildings





Fortified position on the roof of a residential building in the heart of a civilian neighborhood in Beit Lahiya, northern Gaza Strip


## Israeli Air Force air strike footage from Operation Cast Lead showing the use of residential buildings for military purposes

1. The video shows an **anti-aircraft cannon** positioned on the rooftop of a residential building in a densely-populated neighborhood, covered with a camouflage net (January 6, 2009). [Click here to watch](#) 📺
2. The video shows a **rocket launcher** positioned between two residential buildings (January 6, 2009). [Click here to watch](#) 📺
3. The video shows a terrorist launching a **mortar shell** on an IDF force. The launcher is situated on the rooftop of a residential building (January 6, 2009). [Click here to watch](#) 📺

4. A video showing an Israeli Air Force attack on an **outpost** of the Hamas military wing, situated in the midst of residential buildings at the heart of a civilian neighborhood. Secondary explosions seen after the attack are testimony that massive quantities of explosives were stored there (January 6, 2009). **Click here to watch** 

5. The video shows a rocket launch site situated inside a residential area (December 27, 2008). **Click here to watch** 

6. The video shows an attack on a **weapons storehouse** situated inside a civilian residential area. The several secondary explosions which took place after the attack show that there was a significant quantity of explosives stored there (December 27, 2008). **Click here to watch** 

7. The video shows an attack on a **weapons storehouse** situated inside a residential area. Also seen are the secondary explosions which took place as a result of the significant quantity of explosives stored there (December 27, 2008). **Click here to watch** 

## **Information gathered from Hamas operatives detained by the IDF during Operation Cast Lead about the use of residential buildings for military purposes**

5. During questioning, Hamas operatives detained by the IDF during Operation Cast Lead provided ample information on the operative and military use made by Hamas of residential buildings. For example, **Nawaf Faysal Attar, a Hamas operative from Al-Atatra detained on January 11**, related that masked Hamas gunmen used to launch rockets from civilian houses and agricultural areas **despite objections raised by the residents**, who feared that their houses and fields would be destroyed by the IDF. He said that the resistance of local residents was limited because those who dared to oppose Hamas were shot in their legs or executed for collaboration.

6. In his questioning, **Rami Misbah Abed Rabbo, a Hamas operative from Jebaliya**, related that over the past year he used his residence as an observation post and reported IDF movements to Hamas. He further added that during the lull in the fighting, he was approached by a Hamas operative who asked him to set IEDs in an orchard near his residence, saying that

many weapons of Hamas were stored in such orchards. **Raji Misbah Abed Rabbo**, a Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) operative from Jebaliya, said that he used to store explosives at home. He said that Hamas operatives frequently set IEDs in the streets and in the vicinity of mosques and orchards.

7. **Imad Youssef Hamad**, a Hamas operative from **Beit Hanoun**, said that three months before the start of Operation Cast Lead he had authorized Hamas operatives to hide barrels with launchers and rockets in the land belonging to him and his family. He said that three barrels were hidden there, and two others were going to be hidden. He also related that arms and ammunition had been stashed behind his house, including a Kalashnikov rifle.

8. **Muhammad Amasi from Jebaliya**, an operative in the Hamas suicide bombing unit, related that another terrorist and he took over the Hamouda family residence in the neighborhood of Al-Salaam and used it to attack IDF forces who besieged it. He said there were incidents in which he and his fellow squad members fired at IDF soldiers from the house of a Gaza Strip resident, **even though the latter refused to cooperate**: "When we saw the IDF troops on the move, we came into the house of one of the residents **and threatened him to let us fire at the soldiers from his house. He strongly objected, but we weren't asking him.**" Amasi also said that he had escaped to the residence of Sheikh Fathi Abu Ida in Jebaliya and found shelter there. The Sheikh helped him hide the rifle and grenades he carried on his person; however, IDF soldiers were able to locate the stash, raided the house, and arrested him (as related by Muhammad Amasi to Israeli Police interrogators, from an article by Shimon Ifargan, Ma'ariv, February 18).

### **Seized document--note left in a house by Hamas operatives who used it**

9. During the operation, IDF forces found a thank you note left in a house by Hamas operatives who had broken in and used it for fighting (January 12). As already mentioned, according to information gathered from captive Hamas operatives, the residents' resistance to the use made of their houses for military purposes was limited due to concerns for their lives. In many cases, therefore, the civilians were **forced** to let their homes be used for military purposes.

**Translation of the note:**

"Greetings, honored residents of this house. We, your brothers, holy war fighters [mujahideen], used this house and some of the things in it. Our apologies."

