



November 12, 2012

## Escalation in the South – Update (November 12, 13:00 Hours)



Left: A home in Sderot takes a direct hit (Photo by Edi Israeli, courtesy of NRG, November 11, 2012). Right: A home in Netivot after a direct hit on the morning of November 12 (Israel Police Force Facebook page, November 12, 2012).

### Overview

1. The round of escalation in the south that began on November 10 with an anti-tank missile attack on an IDF jeep continues. So far 109 rockets have been fired into Israeli territory, as well as a number of mortar shells.
2. On the morning of November 12 rocket fire from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory recommenced, despite media reports that Egypt had brokered a lull agreement with the Palestinian terrorist organizations. Spokesmen for the terrorist organizations continue to threaten Israel with harsh reprisals. On the other hand, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told a government meeting that "we are prepared to intensify the response."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Spokesman/Pages/spokeStart111112.aspx>

## Rocket Fire

3. Throughout November 11 **rocket and mortar shell fire into Israeli continued and increased**. In addition, rockets with longer ranges were fired and the damage incurred was greater. **A total of 64 rockets hits were identified on November 11**. A number of mortar shells were also fired. A number of Israeli civilians were wounded by the rocket fire, although not seriously; several were treated for shock and there was extensive property damage.

4. Some of the rocket attacks on November 11 were the following:

1) In the morning one of the rockets landed a few meters from a car waiting at a stoplight. The driver was wounded and evacuated to the hospital for treatment.

2) A couple from the southern city of Sderot who were on their way to work were injured by flying bits of debris from a rocket hit.

3) A factory in Sderot took a direct hit.

4) In the afternoon two Grad rockets were fired at Beersheba. Both were intercepted and destroyed by the Iron Dome aerial defense system. There were no casualties and no damage was reported.

5) A rocket hit a building in one of the villages in the western Negev.

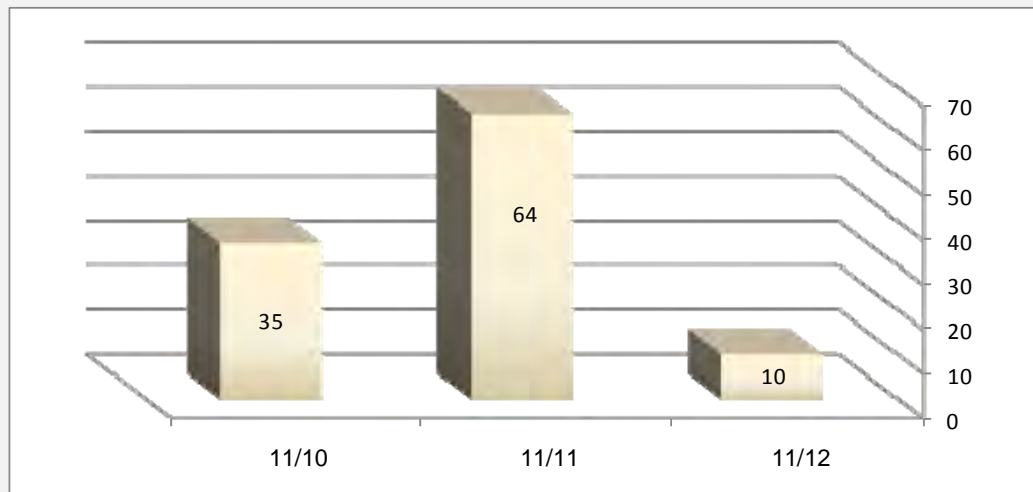
6) In the evening three rockets hit Sderot, one of them falling directly on a residential dwelling. A man was treated for shock; the building incurred damage.

5. According to media reports, the Egyptian-brokered lull was supposed to go into effect at midnight. In reality it did not, and **rocket fire recommenced on the morning of November 12**, when a long-range rocket hit **the city of Netivot**. It fell in front of a building and caused extensive damage to the building and several others nearby. A number of civilians were treated for shock. Another rocket hit damaged the electric grid. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine claimed responsibility for the attack. **Additional rockets were fired at Ashqelon**, two of them intercepted and destroyed by the Iron Dome aerial defense system (IDF Spokesman, November 12, 2012). In addition, a number of hits were identified in the western Negev near the southern Gaza Strip. As of 1300 hours an estimated ten rocket hits have been identified during November 12.



Left: Rocket damage to a home. Right: The remains of a rocket which fell near a village in the western Negev (Sderot Media website, November 11, 2012).

### Rocket fire – Daily Distribution



A total of 109 rocket hits identified in Israeli territory during the current escalation (as of 1300 hours, November 12). The number does not include mortar shells.

Since the beginning of 2012, 783 rockets have been identified in Israeli territory; 1,331 since Operation Cast Lead.

## Claiming Responsibility for the Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire

6. Responsibility for most of the rocket fire attacks was claimed by various terrorist organizations, among them the **Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the Popular Resistance Committees, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and a number of networks affiliated with the global jihad. While Hamas claimed little responsibility, it supported the attacks.**

7. For example, the Hamas website issued a statement on behalf of its own military-terrorist wing and those of the other Palestinian terrorist organizations claiming **joint responsibility** for the rocket attacks. The Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website posted a video documenting rocket attacks, showing the insignia of the other terrorist organizations operating in the Gaza Strip (Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website, November 11, 2012). According to the announcement, the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip had set up a joint operations room to examine responses (Alresala.net website, November 11, 2012). Hamas spokesmen praised the rocket fire and made threats against Israel.



The insignia of the terrorist organizations as they appeared in the announcement posted on the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website.



An improved version of the Quds rocket, claimed by the PIJ to have been launched at Beersheba (Jerusalem Brigades website, November 11, 2012).

## Israel's Responses

### The IDF

8. In response to the continuing rocket fire, Israeli Air Force aircraft struck terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip. Before dawn on November 12 the IAF struck terrorist tunnels and weapons storage sites in the northern Gaza Strip. A rocket-launching site in the southern Gaza Strip was also struck (IDF Spokesman, November 12, 2012). The Palestinian media reported that no one was harmed in the strikes (Safa and Ma'an News Agencies, the PIJ's PalToday website, November 12, 2012)

### The Government of Israel

9. At the start of the weekly government meeting, Israeli Prime Minister **Benjamin Netanyahu** said that **"the IDF is operating, and will operate, aggressively against the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip**, which are taking heavy blows from the IDF. The world needs to understand that Israel will not sit idly by in the face of attempts to attack us. **We are prepared to intensify the response.**"<sup>2</sup>

10. **Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak** said that Israel would not accept terrorist organization attempt to change the rules. He said that "[t]he essence of the struggle is

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Spokesman/Pages/spokeStart111112.aspx/>

over the fence. We intend to enable the IDF to work not just on our side but on the other side as well."<sup>3</sup>

## The Terrorist Organizations' Responses

11. Spokesmen for the Palestinian terrorist organizations continued to blame Israel for the escalation and threatened severe reprisals, but also showed caution. **Islam Shahawan**, spokesman for the ministry of the interior of the de-facto Hamas administration, said that he had ordered the security forces to deploy outside their posts. **Musheir al-Masri**, spokesman for the Hamas faction in the Palestinian Legislative Council, said that Israel would never enjoy security, stability and quiet as long as the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip did not enjoy them. He said that **the "Palestinian resistance" [i.e., the terrorist organizations] would determine the terms of a lull with Israel**, as well as responses and attacks. He said that **an occasional lull in the fighting was nothing more than a time-out devoted to preparing the fighters of the various organizations by increasing their might and weapons** (Qudsnet website, November 11, 2012).

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/11/11/us-palestinians-israel-violence-idUSBRE8A90BE20121111>