



November 18, 2012

## Operation Pillar of Defense – Update No. 2 (November 18, 1300 Hours)



Left: Direct rocket hit on a house in Ashqelon (Israel Police Force Facebook page, November 18, 2012). Right: De-facto Hamas administration headquarters building after the Israeli Air Force strike (PALDF website, November 17, 2012).

### Overview

1. During the first half of November 18, the fifth day of Operation Pillar of Defense, the Palestinian terrorist organizations continued launching rockets into Israeli territory (an estimated 70 rocket hits were identified, including one intercepted by the Iron Dome aerial defense system over Tel Aviv; another was intercepted over Tel Aviv in the evening). The IDF continued attacking terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip.

2. The situation on the ground so far:

1) Israeli Air Force aircraft have attacked more than **800 terrorist targets** in the Gaza Strip. Among them were rocket-launching squads, loaded rocket launchers, military-terrorist infrastructure targets and symbols of Hamas' administration (its headquarters, the ministry of the interior, police headquarters, etc.).

2) The terrorist organizations, led by Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), have bombarded Israeli with continuous, intensive rocket attacks (although the number of rockets has lessened), targeting primarily the large cities in the south: Beersheba, Ashqelon and Ashdod. In addition four rockets targeted Tel Aviv (two of them intercepted by the Iron Dome aerial defense system) and one rocket targeted Jerusalem.

3) Three Israeli civilians were killed (in Kiryat Malachi) and three IDF soldiers were wounded by flying rocket debris. More than 150 civilians required medical treatment, most of them for anxiety, cuts and bruises. Sixty Palestinians were reported killed, more than half of them Hamas and PIJ terrorist operatives (including Ahmed Jaabari and other senior terrorists). The others were uninvolved civilians who were killed by mistake.

3. So far, from Israel's point of view, the interim balance is favorable for many reasons: the targeted killing of Ahmed Jaabari, the commander of Hamas' military-terrorist wing; the severe blows dealt to the terrorists' long-range rocket arsenal and other aspects of their military-terrorist infrastructure; the effectiveness of the Iron Dome, which improves the defense of the Israeli civilian front; the relatively small number of civilian casualties; Israeli public opinion, which is overwhelmingly in favor of the operation; and the support and understanding Israel has received (so far) from the international community, which recognizes its right to defend itself from rocket attacks.

4. However, Hamas is far from ready to raise a white flag. It is encouraged by its ability to continue firing massive, intensive barrages of rockets (although fewer than initially) and to disrupt the daily life of a significant number of Israelis, firing, for the first time, long-range rockets which reached Tel Aviv and Jerusalem (although the hits were isolated and did not disrupt routine life in either city). Politically Hamas is encouraged by Egyptian and other Arab shows of solidarity, manifested by the visits of the Egyptian president and Tunisian foreign minister to the Gaza Strip.

5. Although it continues, Operation Pillar of Defense is apparently approaching a crossroads: **in Cairo** contacts have begun for a mechanism to achieve a cease fire, led by Egypt with the collaboration of the heads of Hamas and the PIJ. However, **on the ground**, the IDF continues making preparations to broaden the operation and has called up reservists for a possible ground campaign.

## Massive Rocket Fire into Israeli Territory

6. For the fifth consecutive day, Israel has been subjected to massive barrages of rocket fire from the Gaza Strip. From the beginning of Operation Pillar of Defense until the morning of November 18, **between 700 and 800 rocket hits were identified in Israel territory:**

1) In addition to the number of identified rocket hits, an additional 80 to 90 (more than 10%) were launched but fell either in the Gaza Strip or into the sea.

2) **Most of the rockets targeted the southern cities of Beersheba and Ashdod** (within a range of 40 kilometers, or 25 miles), and **Ashqelon** (within a range of 20 kilometers, or 12.5 miles). Most of the rockets targeting those cities were fired in the morning or afternoon, when most people were on their way to or from work, **in an attempt to cause as many civilian casualties as possible.**

3) **Long-range rockets targeted the Tel Aviv area five times.** Twice they were intercepted by the Iron Dome and three times they fell in open areas. On one instance a vehicle was damaged. With that exception, no damage was incurred and there were no significant disruptions of daily life in the center of the country. One rocket was launched at Jerusalem and fell in the region of Gush Etzion (in the Judean hills south of Jerusalem).

4) Even on the morning of November 16, when Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi paid a visit to the Gaza Strip, the rocket fire into Israel continued.



Left: Police demolitions expert removes the remains of a rocket (Israel Police Force Facebook page, November 17, 2012). Right: The remains of a rocket (Sderot Media Center, November 17, 2012).

7. The number of rocket hits identified in Israel so far **approaches the number identified during Operation Cast Lead** (925). The extent and intensiveness of the rocket fire, the ranges of the rockets (especially those with a range of 40 kilometers which reach Ashdod and Beersheba) and the rocket attacks on Tel Aviv and Jerusalem **clearly reflect the Iranian-supported and assisted military might Hamas and the PIJ have acquired** since Operation Cast Lead. Their arsenals have been significantly upgraded, as has their ability to disrupt daily life in Israel.

**8. Prominent examples of rocket fire are the following:**

1) On the morning of **November 18** a four-story apartment building in **Ashqelon** took a direct hit. The rocket penetrated the roof of the building, while another rocket exploded in the street. Two civilians were wounded and five suffered anxiety attacks. Cars parked in the street were damaged.

2) On the afternoon of **November 17** the fourth floor of an apartment building in **Ashdod** took a direct rocket hit. Several civilians suffered anxiety attacks and the building incurred severe damage.



A car hit by a rocket in Ashdod (Israel Police Force Facebook page, November 18, 2012).

- 3) On the morning of **November 17** a rocket hit a house in a village near the Gaza Strip. There were no casualties; the building incurred severe damage.
- 4) On the morning of **November 17** four IDF soldiers in the western Negev were injured when a mortar shell fell near them.
- 5) On the morning of **November 16**, during the Egyptian prime minister's visit to the Gaza Strip, 21 rockets were fired into Israeli territory (Coordinator for government activities in the territories website, November 16, 2012).
- 6) On the morning of **November 16** the jeep of foreign correspondents who had come to document the events was attacked with an anti-tank missile. Some of the correspondents incurred slight injuries.



Left: A house in a western Negev village takes a direct hit (Sderot Media Center, November 17, 2012). Right: A house in the western Negev takes a direct hit (Photo by Edi Israel, courtesy of NRG, November 17, 2012).

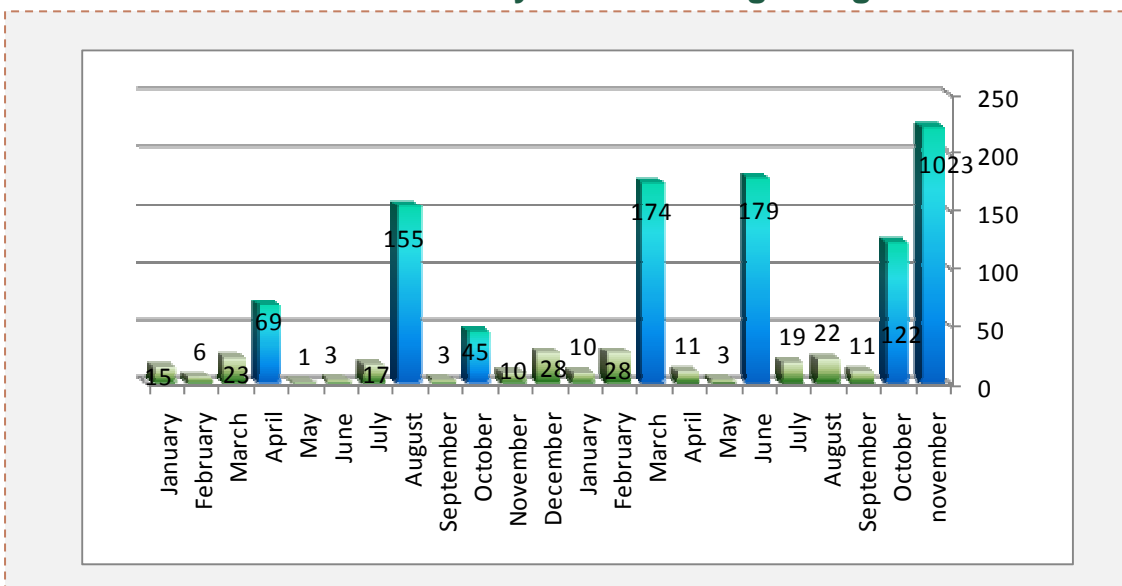
### Long-Range Rockets Attack Tel Aviv Area and Jerusalem

9) So far **long-range rockets** have been used to attack the Tel Aviv area **five times**. The first fell in Rishon Letzion (13 kilometers, or about 8 miles south of Tel Aviv) in the early afternoon of November 15. The second was launched on the same day at about 1830 hours. On the afternoon of November 17 the Iron Dome was deployed in the Tel Aviv area. **Since then it has succeeded in intercepting two more rockets**, one on the afternoon of November 17 and the second on the morning of November 18. The debris from the warhead of the second rocket fell on a car in the Tel Aviv suburb of Holon and set it on fire. A rocket was fired at Jerusalem, and the hit was identified near a Palestinian village in Gush Etzion.

10. The **PIJ** claimed responsibility for the November 15 rocket attack on Tel Aviv, claiming it had fired a Fajr-5 rocket (Jerusalem Brigades website, November 15, 2012). **Hamas** claimed responsibility for the November 18 rocket attack as well as the November 16 rocket attack on Jerusalem. Hamas spokesmen claimed they were M75 rockets (Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website, November 16, 2012); in our assessment they were upgraded long-range rockets manufactured by Hamas.

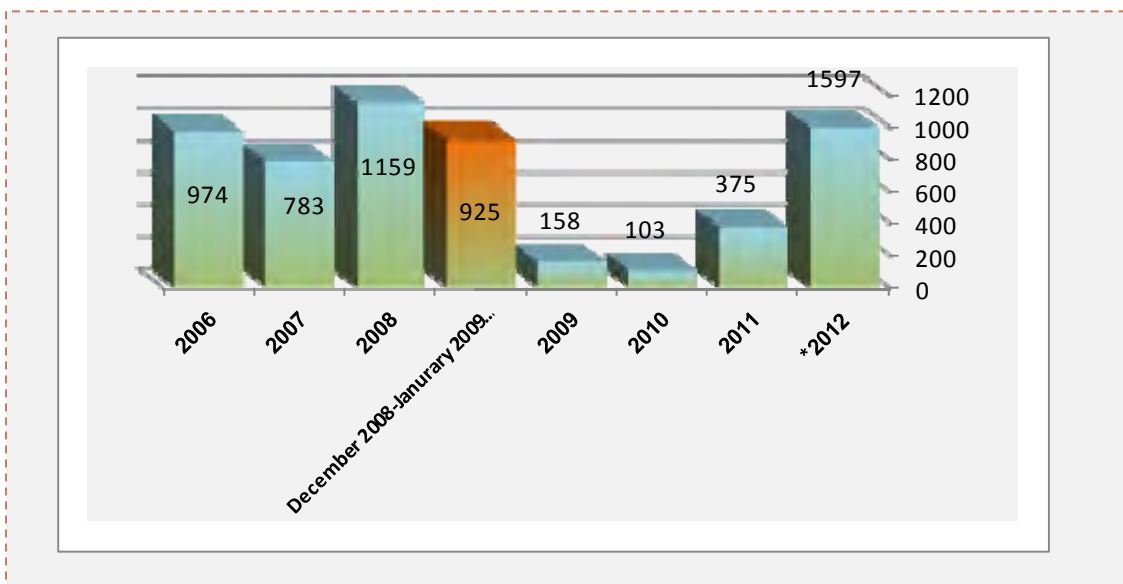
## Statistical Data

### Rockets Hits in Israeli Territory since the Beginning of 2011<sup>1</sup>



**Note:** The graph clearly illustrates the rounds of escalation and their increasing frequency during the six months until Operation Pillar of Defense.

### Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire since the Hamas Takeover Of the Gaza Strip



\*Based on an estimated 800 rockets identified during Operation Pillar of Defense, as of November 18, 1200 hours.

**Note:** The graph shows the annual increase in rocket fire since Operation Cast Lead. In 2012, which has not yet ended, the amount of rocket fire has

<sup>1</sup> Based on an estimated 800 rockets identified during Operation Pillar of Defense, as of November 18, 1200 hours.

approached that of 2008, whose high levels of rocket fire led to Operation Cast Lead.

## Claiming Responsibility for the Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire

11. **Hamas and the PIJ** claimed responsibility for most of rockets, including long-range rockets, fired into Israeli territory. Other small organizations, such as the Popular Resistance Committees, Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade and networks affiliated with the global jihad also claimed responsibility for a number of rocket launchings (Websites of the military-terrorist wings of the various organizations).

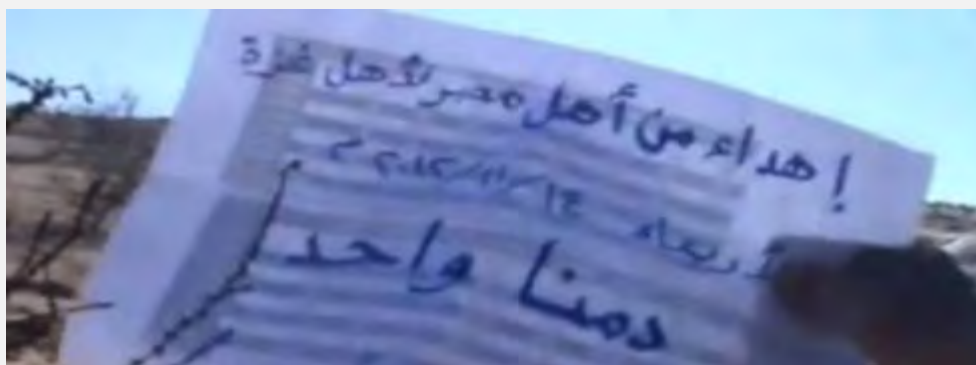
## The Global Jihad – Rocket Fire from the Sinai Peninsula

12. The Palestinian media reported that on the evening of November 16, 2012, the Egyptian security services noticed the launching of three rockets from the Sinai Peninsula at the Kerem Shalom region. They were launched from a desert area a number of kilometers south of the Kerem Shalom crossing (Ma'an News Agency, November 17, 2012).

13. On the same day a Salafist-jihadi network called the Shura Council of the Jihad Fighters of Greater Jerusalem claimed responsibility for four Grad rockets fired from the Sinai Peninsula targeting the western Negev on November 14. The network uploaded a video and announcement to YouTube claiming that the rocket fire was in retaliation for "harm done to civilians in the Gaza Strip." In reality, the rockets were fired close to the beginning of Operation Pillar of Defense, not during it.



From the YouTube video documenting the rocket fire



Before the rocket fire was shown, a notice was held up to the camera reading "A tribute from Egypt to the Gazans, Wednesday, November 14, 2012. We are one [people]" (YouTube).

## Casualties

### Israeli Casualties

14. On November 15 three civilians were killed by rocket fire in Kiryat Malachi. According to figures released by the Red Magen David (the Israeli Red Cross), since the beginning of the operation an estimated 150 civilians received medical treatment related to rocket hits. Most of the wounded suffer from cuts and bruises. An estimated 20 were treated for anxiety. (Red Magen David website, November 18, 2012). On

November 17 three IDF soldiers were wounded when a rocket landed near them (IDF Spokesman, November 17, 2012).

### Palestinian Casualties

15. The Palestinian media has reported that so far, 60 Palestinians have been killed in Israeli strikes and several hundred wounded. In our assessment, about half of those killed were terrorist operatives, most of them belonging to Hamas and a few from the PIJ. The rest were uninvolved civilians killed by mistake. Some of the terrorist operatives killed were:



Ahmed Jaabari, commander of Hamas' military-terrorist wing (Masrawy.com website)



Mohammed al-Hums, Hamas terrorist operative, Ahmed Jaabari's personal aide (Hamas forum website, November 14, 2012).



Khaled Khalil al-Shaer (Facebook.com website). Senior rocket operative in Hamas' military-terrorist wing (IDF Spokesman, November 17, 2012).



The funeral procession of Ismail Khatab Qandil, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades opinion in the Khan Yunis district (PALDF.net website).



Ahmed al-Atrash, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative in Rafah (PALDF.net website).



Wael Haydar al-Ghalban, Hamas artillery operative (PALDF.net website).



Mukhlas Adwan, major in the national security apparatus in the Gaza Strip and Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades terrorist operative (PALDF.net website)



Tamer Khaled al-Hamri, senior terrorist operative in the Jerusalem Brigades, the PIJ's military-terrorist wing, belonged to the Dir al-Balah Brigades (Saraya.ps website)



Ayman Asalim and Muhammad Yassin, two artillery operatives from the Jerusalem Brigades, the PIJ's military-terrorist wing (Saraya.ps website).

## IDF Activity

### Strikes in the Gaza Strip

16. During Operation Pillar of Defense the IDF has carried out massive strikes from the air and sea. **IAF aircraft have carried out more than 1000 sorties and attacked more than 800 terrorist targets** (as of the morning of November 18).

17. The IDF was careful not to harm uninvolved civilians. On the night of November 15 handbills were again distributed in flyovers over a number of locations in the Gaza Strip, warning Gazans not to approach terrorist organization bases. On occasion attacks were aborted because of the civilian presence at the target. For example, a launching pit was not attacked when a civilian was identified as entering the area (IDF Spokesman, November 17, 2012).



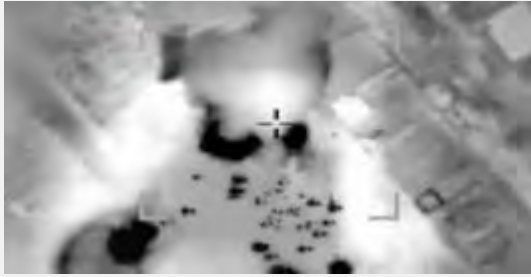
Flyer distributed on the night of November 15 (IDF Spokesman, November 16, 2012).

18. The most recent main targets were the following (IDF Spokesman, November 18, 2012):

1) **Rocket-launching squads and underground launchers:** Dozens of underground rocket launchers and launching pits were attacked, as were squads in the process of preparing to launch or having just launched rockets into Israeli territory. On the morning of November 18, shortly after the rocket attack on the Tel Aviv region, the site from which the rocket was launched was attacked and destroyed (IDF Spokesman, November 18, 2012).

2) **Military infrastructure:** Attacked were weapons stockpiles, training camps, posts, headquarters, terrorist tunnels and weapons smuggling tunnels, houses of military-terrorist operatives.

3) **Symbols of Hamas rule:** The headquarters of the de-facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip was attacked from the air and completely destroyed. The headquarters of the internal security forces was attacked, as were the office of Hamas administration head Ismail Haniya, a Hamas installation near Haniya's house in the Shati refugee camp, the Gaza City police station, and the Saraya Building, which serves as Hamas' main training camp (IDF Spokesman, November 17, 2012). In addition, a broadcast facility serving Hamas' terrorist activity in the northern Gaza Strip was also attacked (IDF Spokesman, November 18, 2012).



Left: A Fajr-5 launcher struck by the IAF (IDF Spokesman, November 17, 2012). Right: The ruins of the Hamas naval police post (PALDF.net website, November 17, 2012).

### Manufacture of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) Uncovered

19. IDF activity in the Gaza Strip uncovered sites where **Hamas was attempting to manufacture UAVs which were planned for use against Israel**. The sites were attacked and destroyed by IAF aircraft (IDF Spokesman, not 17, 2012).



Video taken by the IAF shows a Hamas UAV in a training flight in Khan Yunis (IDF Spokesman, November 17, 2012).

### The Iron Dome Aerial Defense System

20. Since the beginning of Operation Pillar of Defense the Iron Dome has successfully intercepted and destroyed more than 200 rockets, approximately one third of the

rockets used to attack Israel. In IDF assessment, the Iron Dome has a success rate of about 90% (IDF Spokesman, November 17, 2012).

21. On the afternoon of November 17 the fifth Iron Dome system was deployed in the Tel Aviv area. Two hours later it successfully intercepted a rocket launched at a large city in the region (IDF Spokesman, November 17, 2012). The following morning the Iron Dome again intercepted and destroyed a rocket attacking the Tel Aviv area.



**Installing the fifth Iron Dome, Tel Aviv area (IDF Spokesman, November 17, 2012).**

### **Preparations for a Possible Ground Activity**

22. The IDF is prepared to continue fighting and has begun mobilizing reserve forces for a possible ground activity. The IDF Spokesman briefed the press on November 17, saying that the mobilization of reserve forces continued (the Israeli government authorized the mobilization of up to 75,000 reserves). According to the IDF Spokesman, the reserves are undergoing training for the ground campaign (IDF Spokesman, November 17, 2012).



IDF forces deploy for a possible ground campaign (IDF Spokesman, November 17, 2012).

## The Civilian Situation in the Gaza Strip

### Medical Equipment Enters the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom Crossing

23. Despite the massive rocket fire targeting the Gaza Strip crossings, Israel decided to open them to ensure supplies would be delivered to the Gazan civilians. **On the morning of November 18, 124 trucks loaded with humanitarian equipment entered the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom crossing** (IDF Spokesman, November 18, 2012).

24. The equipment entered the Gaza Strip following an announcement from the Coordinator for government activities in the territories that Red Cross and UNRWA trucks would be allowed to deliver medical equipment and medicine (Website of the Coordinator for Government Activities in the Territories, November 18, 2012).

### The Humanitarian Situation

25. So far there are no significant humanitarian issues in the Gaza Strip. Generally speaking, electricity and other services operate without interruption (however, in Gaza City the aerial strikes occasionally cause problems to the electric grid). Civilians remain in their houses leaving only when necessary, mainly to stock up on food and fuel. The schools are closed, as are the main markets and most of the stores.

26. The de-facto Hamas administration presented a false picture of an alleged "medical crisis." On November 16 Mufeed Mkhallalati, minister of health, told a news conference that if medical equipment, medicine and fuel were not delivered immediately to the hospitals in the Gaza Strip, they would shut down within eight hours, causing the deaths of most of the seriously ill patients and wounded (Al-Quds TV, November 16, 2012). In point of fact, in our assessment the statement was meant to exert pressure on the Egyptian government to deliver medical aid and open the Rafah crossing, but in vain

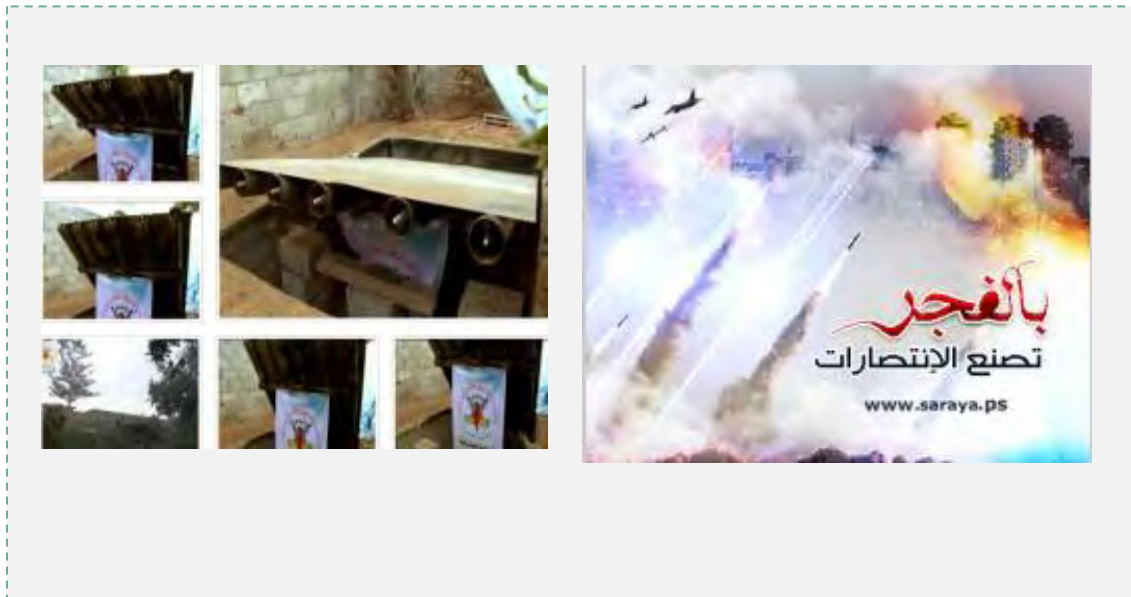
27. On November 17 the head of the Egyptian emergency services said that the Egyptian ministry of health had sent 33 ambulances to Rafah and El-Arish so that wounded Gazans could be transferred to hospitals in Egypt. He added that 45 additional ambulances were set to go to the Rafah crossing. He said that the ministry had sent large teams of doctors to the Gaza Strip on November 15, along with medicines and medical equipment.

### **Hamas Control of the Gaza Strip**

28. The de-facto Hamas administration continues to control the Gaza Strip **with no signs of civilian resistance or protest**. Its security forces carry out their missions from alternative headquarters and offices and patrol the roads. The ministry of the interior and its security forces act against Gazans suspected of collaborating with Israel and price gouging. The minister of the economy announced that teams from his ministry were supervising the distribution of fuel (Al-Ra'i Online website, November 16, 2012).

## The Media – The Battle for Hearts and Minds

### Glorifying Rocket Firing Capabilities



From the Jerusalem Brigades website:  
First use of an underground multiple  
rocket launch, raised by motor.

From the Jerusalem Brigades website:  
"Fajr rockets will bring victory."

29. In our assessment, Hamas regards the current situation of Operation Pillar of Defense as tipped in its favor. The de-facto Hamas administration was encouraged by the solidarity shown by the Egyptians and other Arab states (manifested by the visits of the head of the Egyptian government and additional Arab delegations), by its ability to fire continuing massive barrages of rockets into Israel disrupting daily life, by being able to target Israel's main cities (Tel Aviv, Jerusalem), and by the relatively small number of Palestinian casualties. All of the above may make it easier for Hamas to claim victory, as it did during previous events, such as Operation Cast Lead.

30. Hamas' main media messages and themes are the following:

- 1) **Creating a warlike atmosphere** through rocket fire, playing songs encouraging military exploits and mourning, showing videos presenting its military capabilities, and issuing threats (for example, of suicide bombing attacks in Israeli cities), etc.
- 2) **Hamas refuses to surrender** even after its administration building was bombed, and claims that its destruction strengthened the movement .

3) If Israel institutes a ground incursion into the Gaza Strip, it can expect "surprises." (The PIJ has threatened to capture IDF soldiers).

4) **Hamas surprised Israel** by launching rockets at Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, and revealed it had advanced capabilities.

5) **The Arab world stands beside the Palestinians.** Following the visits of the Egyptian president and Tunisian foreign minister, other visits are expected.

31. Alongside authentic expressions of satisfaction with the ability of Hamas and the other terrorist organizations to stand firm in the face of the Israeli attacks, their media fabricate reports and issue disinformation and propaganda for psychological warfare (as they did during Operation Cast Lead). Their objectives are to raise the morale of both civilians and terrorist operatives and to build the foundation for the ongoing spin of **the myth of victory**. One example is the lie of having downed an Israeli F-16 with an anti-aircraft missile. On November 16 at 1636 hours Hamas' Al-Aqsa TV flashed a message on screen to the effect that "the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades downed a warplane with a surface to air missile." Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum announced that downing the plane was a sign of "a real victory" over Israel (Al-Aqsa TV, November 16, 2012).



The lie on Hamas TV about downing an Israeli plane: "A war plane of the Zionist forces was downed by [the Izz al-Din] al-Qassam [Brigades]."

32. The following are other examples of Hamas reports which were lies:

1) Claiming to have attacked Israeli Navy ships with missiles.

2) Attacking the Knesset [Israeli parliament] with a rocket.



Hamas' Al-Aqsa TV announces that a Fajr-5 hit the Knesset (YouTube)

3) Exaggerating the number of Israelis killed.

4) Calling the Iron Dome aerial defense system a complete failure.

## Reactions in the Arab World

### Deliberations in Cairo for a Possible Mechanism to End to the Fighting

33. On November 17 a Hamas delegation headed by **Khaled Mashal** arrived in Cairo. PIJ leader **Ramadan Shallah** arrived as well. They met with the Egyptian minister of intelligence and head of Egyptian General Intelligence. The agenda was to examine possible ways of ending the fighting in the Gaza Strip through the mediation of Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi.

34. **Note:** On November 17 Erdogan, the Turkish prime minister also arrived in Cairo and met with President Morsi. The emir of Qatar is also expected to arrive. The Egyptian president, Turkish prime minister and Qatari emir were supposed to meet with Khaled Mashal on the evening of November 17.

### The Egyptian Prime Minister Visits the Gaza Strip

35. Hisham Qandil, the Egyptian prime minister, paid a visit to the Gaza Strip on November 16, leading a delegation of 14. It was the first visit of its kind since Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip in June 2007. The objective of the visit was to show the

support of the Egyptian government and people for the de-facto Hamas administration and the Gazans. The Tunisian delegation, headed by its foreign minister, visited the following day. Other Arab-Muslim dignitaries are expected to visit as well.

36. While on a visit to the Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, Hisham Qandil held a press conference with Ismail Haniya, and in the name of Mohamed Morsi expressed Egypt's support for the Palestinian people. He said that Egypt was determined to end the so-called [Israeli] "aggression" and to bring about a ceasefire [which would last] until a permanent peace and the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. He promised to send medical aid to the Gaza Strip but did not meet Hamas' expectations of opening the Rafah crossing.



**Egyptian Prime Minister Qandil holds a press conference in the Gaza Strip (Al-Aqsa TV, November 16, 2012).**

37. The visits and declarations of support from Egypt and other Arab-Muslim states give Hamas political and media support in the Arab-Muslim arena, which is led by Egypt and the Muslim Brotherhood camp in the Middle East. In our assessment, in the Gaza Strip the visits raise the morale of both Hamas and the Gazan populace, and are an important factor in the "victory" myth Hamas is eager to spin.

## **Other Reactions in the Arab-Muslim World**

### **Hezbollah**

38. Hezbollah's deputy leader, **Sheikh Naim Qassem**, said that the "resistance" [i.e., anti-Israel terrorism and violence] and the jihad were "the only solution." He sent his condolences on the death of Ahmed Jaabari and other "martyrs," and **called on the**

**Palestinians to continue firing rockets into Israel** "to create the correct deterrence" and defend the Gazans (Al-Manar TV, Lebanon, November 16, 2012).

### **The Palestinian Authority**

39. After an emergency meeting of the Palestinian leadership in Ramallah, Mahmoud Abbas gave a speech strongly attacking what he called "Israeli aggression" in the Gaza Strip. He said that the PA had asked the secretary of the Arab League to send a delegation of Arab foreign ministers to the Gaza Strip, including the Palestinian foreign minister. He added that the PA had contacted Egyptian President Morsi, the American administration, European countries and the UN Secretary General to have them "stop the aggression."

40. Mahmoud Abbas stressed the PA's determination to bring the issue of a Palestinian state to a vote in the UN. "We are committed to the decision to appeal to the UN in any event," he said (Palestinian TV, November 16, 2012).