



November 21, 2012

## Operation Pillar of Defense – Update No. 5 (November 20, 1300 Hours)



Severe damage in Beersheba caused by a barrage of rockets (Israel Police Force Facebook page, November 20, 2012).

### Overview

1. On November 19 and the first half of November 20, the seventh day of Operation Pillar of Defense, rocket fire into Israel continued.
2. During the past 24 hours (especially overnight) the IDF continued massive air strikes on terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip. Among the targets hit were terrorist facilities, rocket-launching squads and Hamas administrative sites. In addition, there were targeted killings of terrorist operatives. Noteworthy was the strike on four senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) terrorist operatives hiding on the second floor of the Al-Shorouq Tower in the heart of Gaza City, where Western and Arabic news agencies and television channels have their offices.
3. In Cairo (where the Secretary General of the UN has arrived) contacts continued to devise a mechanism for a ceasefire. Senior Hamas and PIJ figures expressed interest in a ceasefire but made it clear they were not in a hurry.

## Rocket Fire into Israel

4. Rocket fire into Israeli territory continued without cessation November 19, the sixth day of Operation Pillar of Defense.

5. The main attacks on November 19 were the following:

1) **Ashqelon** took most of the hits. During the morning a rocket hit a school. Another school was hit in the evening. There were no casualties, but both buildings were damaged. An additional rocket hit and damaged a residential dwelling.

2) **Ashdod** was attacked by a barrage of rockets; there were no casualties.

3) **Beersheba** was attacked by a barrage of rockets in the afternoon. One rocket landed in an open area, the rest were intercepted and destroyed by the Iron Dome aerial defense system.



Rocket hits in Beersheba (Website of the ZAKA spokesman, November 20 2012).

4) A large number of rockets fell on **towns and villages in the western Negev near the Gaza Strip**; a woman suffered slight injuries.

6. **On the morning of November 20**, after a relatively quiet night, rocket fire was renewed and a barrage of rockets attacked **Beersheba**, Israel's largest southern city. Eight rockets were intercepted by the Iron Dome aerial defense system. A rocket hit a bus, empty except for the driver, who was wounded by flying debris. A club was damaged, as were a house and parked cars. Rockets were also fired at towns and villages in the western Negev near the Gaza Strip. An IDF reserve officer was seriously wounded by flying rocket fragments. The rocket fire continued into the afternoon. In the assessment of the IDF Spokesman, the increase in rocket fire was the result of the serious damage done to the Palestinian terrorist organizations by the nighttime IDF strikes and their desire to make a show of strength before a possible ceasefire (IDF Spokesman, November 20, 2012).

7. At **1413 hours** two long-range rockets were fired **in the direction of Jerusalem**. One fell in Gush Etzion (south of Jerusalem) and then other in the Hebron district. They were fired a short time before UN Secretary General Ban-ki Moon arrived in Jerusalem. There were no casualties and no damage was reported.

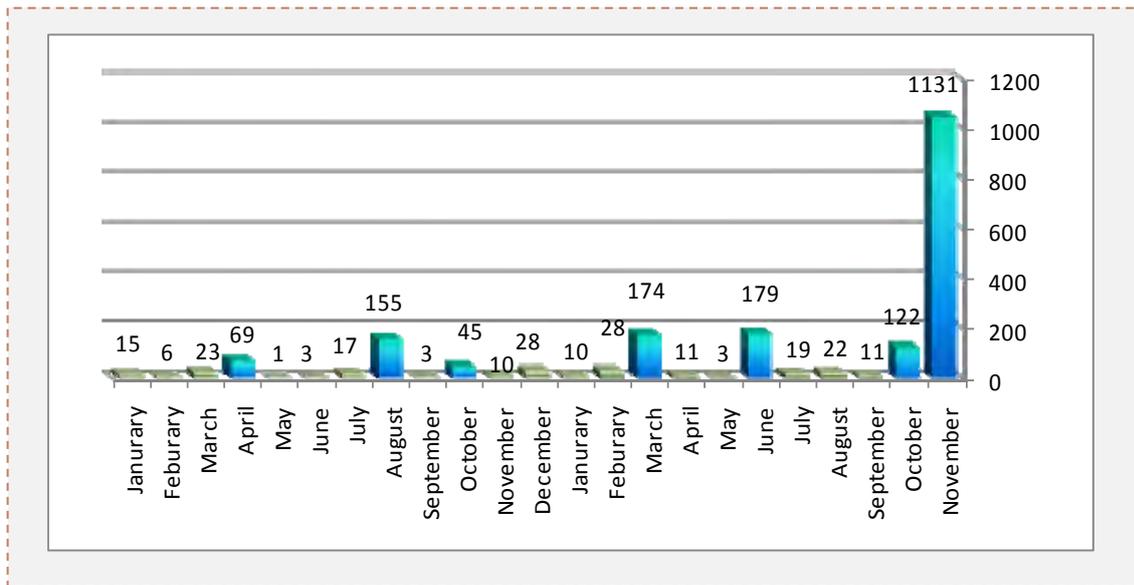


Demolitions experts from the Israel Police Force collect the remains of the rockets (Photo by Shuki Amzalag, IPF spokesman, November 20, 2012).

## Statistical Data

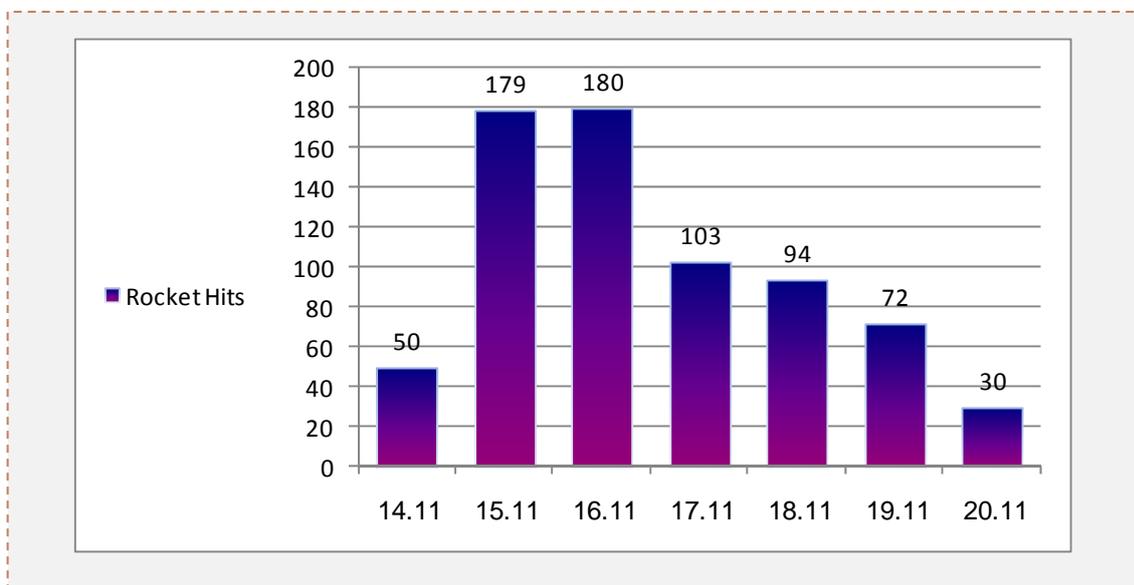
8. During the past 24 hours **72 rocket hits were identified in Israeli territory**. On the morning of November 20 (as of 1030 hours) **30 rocket hits** had been identified. Since the beginning of Operation Pillar of Defense **708 rockets have hit Israel and more than 1,000 have been fired**.

## Rockets Hits in Israeli Territory since the Beginning of 2011



**Note:** The graph clearly illustrates the rounds of escalation and their increasing frequency during the six months until Operation Pillar of Defense. It includes **708 rocket hits** identified during the operation, which still continues.

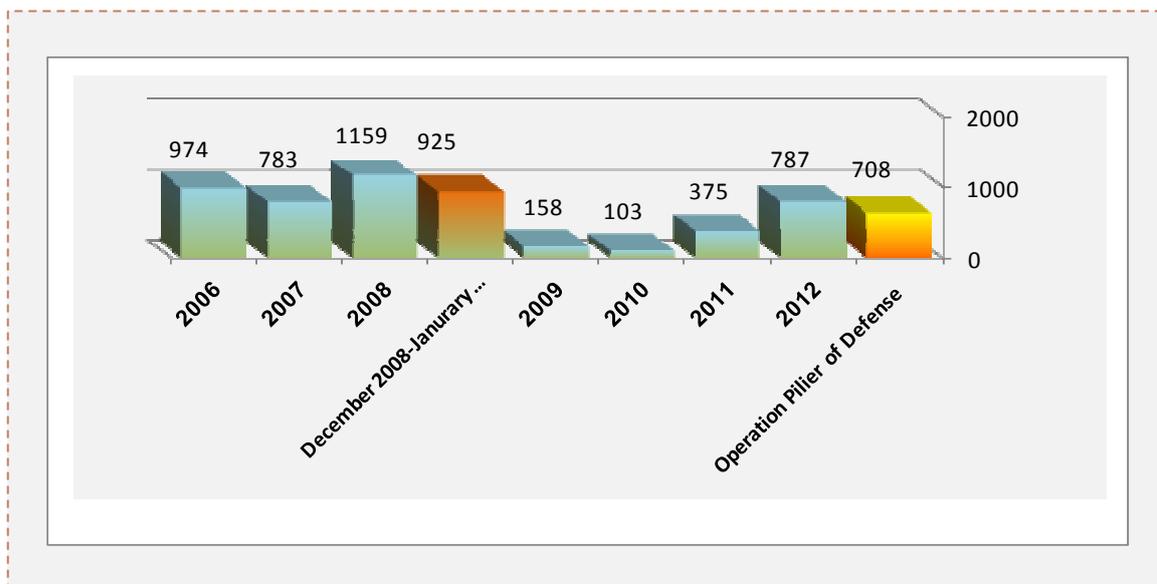
## Daily Distribution of Rocket Hits in Israel's South since the Beginning of Operation Pillar of Defense



- ✓ As of November 20. The graph shows the decrease in rocket hits.
- ✓ **So far 708 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory and more than 1,000 have been fired.**

✓ **Nine long-range rockets (of more than 40 kilometers, or 25 miles) were fired. Six either fell or were intercepted in the Tel Aviv area and three in the Jerusalem area.**

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



\*Based on an estimated 708 rocket hits as of 1030 hours, November 20 (the number of launchings, in our assessment, is about three times greater than the number hits).

### Claiming Responsibility for Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire

9. **Hamas** continues to claim responsibility for most of the rocket fire, followed by the **PIJ**. Other organizations have also made claims, such as the Popular Resistance Committees, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade and various networks affiliated with the global jihad (Websites of the organizations).

### IDF Activity

#### Air Strikes on the Gaza Strip

10. During November 19 the IDF struck scores of terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip. The strikes continued into the night, when **an estimated 100 targets were hit** (IDF Spokesman, November 20, 2012). According to IDF data, **since the beginning of the operation 1,350 terrorist targets have been struck.**

11. Among the targets hit on November 19-20 were the following (IDF Spokesman, November 19-20, 2012).

1) **Terrorist infrastructure:** Six underground rocket launchers, a training camp, weapons stockpiles belonging to the terrorist organizations, and more than 50 smuggling tunnels in the southern Gaza Strip as well as tunnels used by the terrorists to hide.

2) **Rocket-launching squads:** On the afternoon of November 19 the IDF struck a vehicle in the northern Gaza Strip used by Hamas to transport rockets. In addition, a number of squads responsible for firing rockets into Israel were also attacked. A launcher used to fire rockets at the towns and villages near the Gaza Strip on the morning of November 20 was hit, as was a rocket-launching squad in the Al-Atatra neighborhood of Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip. Another squad was attacked in Jabalia, north of Gaza City.

3) **Hamas administration sites:** A police station, the Islamic National Bank (established by Hamas in 2008).



Left: The attack on Hamas' Islamic National Bank (Filastin al-'Aan, November 19, 2012). Right: The attack on the police station in Sajaiya (Hamas website, November 19, 2012).

4) **Targeted killing of PIJ terrorist operatives:** At around 1700 hours on November 19 the IDF attacked a hideout of senior PIJ terrorist operatives. It was on the second floor of the Al-Shorouq Tower, a building in the heart of Gaza City and the location of the offices of Western and Arabic media. In addition, the houses of high-ranking terrorist.



**Left: The Israeli attack on the Al-Shorouq Towers (Paltimes.net website, November 19). Right: Hamas' national security headquarters in the Saraya compound in Gaza after the Israeli attack (Hamas forum website, November 19, 2012).**

### Israeli Navy Activity

12. While the Israeli Air Force attacked from the air, the Israeli Navy also attacked terrorist targets along the Gazan coast (IDF Spokesman, November 20, 2012).

## Casualties

### Israeli Casualties

13. According to the Red Magen David (the Israeli Red Cross), during November 19 sixteen Israelis received medical treatment, most of them for cuts and bruises, and some for anxiety. Since the beginning of Operation Pillar of Defense more than 252 Israeli civilians have required medical attention.

14. On the morning of November 20 an IDF reserve officer was serious wounded by rocket fragments in one of the towns in the western Negev.

### Palestinian Casualties

15. According to the Hamas website, as of the morning of November 20, 109 Palestinians had allegedly been killed and 885 wounded. In our assessment, about half of those killed were terrorist operatives.

16. According to the IDF Spokesman, during the day IDF attacks killed 12 terrorist operatives (IDF Spokesman, November 20, 2012). Four of them were senior PIJ operatives in a hideout on the second floor of the building in Gaza City where the offices of news services and TV stations were located (IDF Spokesman, November 19, 2012).<sup>1</sup>

17. The PIJ operatives killed were (IDF Spokesman, November 19, 2012):

1) **Bha'a Abu al-Ata**, commander of the **PIJ's** Gaza City brigade and a member of the organization's supreme military council. He had been involved in planning and carrying out rocket and other terrorist attacks on Israel.

2) **Taysir Mahmoud Muhammad Jaabari**, a senior PIJ operative, resident of Sajaiya, a member of the organization's supreme military council and holding it operations portfolio. In the past he commanded the Gaza brigade and was involved in firing rockets and planning terrorist attacks on Israel.

3) **Khalil Bahatini**, a senior figure in implementing the organization's military buildup and head of its preventive security apparatus. He was a pivotal figure in the organization's long-range rocket wing.

4) **Ramez Kharb**, a senior figure in the PIJ's military-terrorist wing. He held the propaganda portfolio in the Gaza City brigade, and in the past commanded it.

### The Iron Dome Aerial Defense System

18. The Iron Dome, deployed in five locations, continues to intercept and destroy a significant percentage of the rockets fired by the Palestinian terrorist organizations. On November 19 it successfully intercepted 37 rockets. Since the beginning of Operation Pillar of Defense it has destroyed more than 300 rockets.

## The Civilian Situation in the Gaza Strip

19. According to reports from the Gaza Strip, there is **allegedly a shortage of food** arising from the difficulties of making deliveries to the stores in various neighborhoods.

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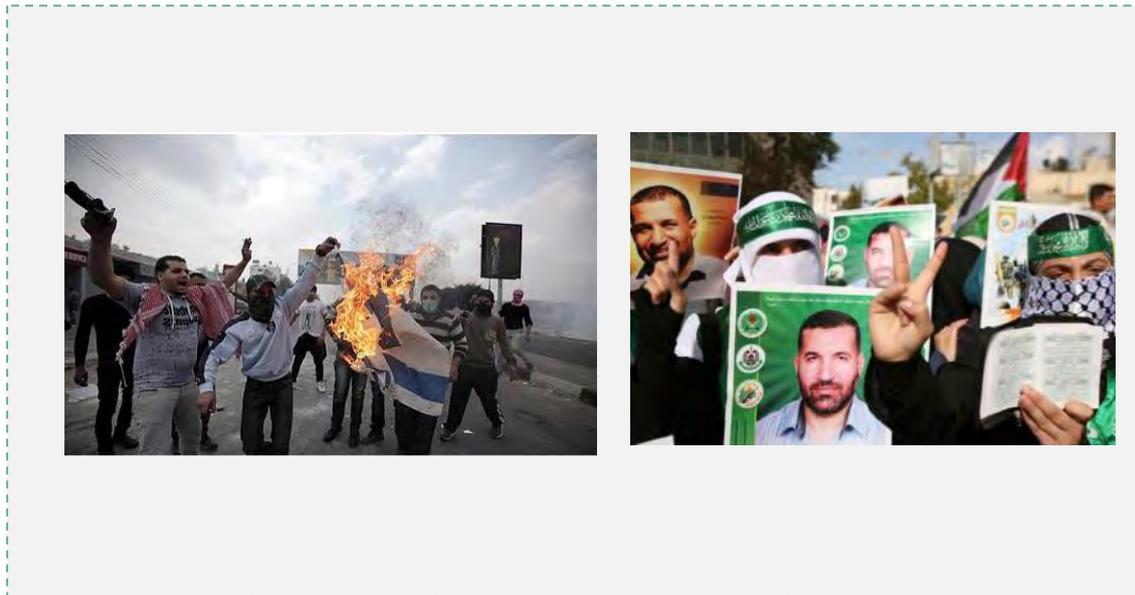
<sup>1</sup> For further information see the November 20, 2012 ITIC bulletin "Operation Pillar of Defense – Update No. 4 –Terrorist Organizations Use Foreign Media Facilities for Camouflage and Protection."

There is a lack of agricultural produce because farmers cannot reap their crops. There are also prolonged power outages (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, London, November 19, 2012).

## Judea and Samaria

### Increase in Demonstrations and Protests

20. Since the beginning of Operation Pillar of Defense **the Palestinians in Judea and Samaria have held demonstrations in support of Hamas**. More than once the demonstrations spun out of control and became riots. The rioters attempted to block roads with rocks and burning tires, and threw stones and Molotov cocktails. The Palestinian media reported many Palestinians wounded **during confrontations with IDF forces** (Ma'an News Agency, November 19, 2012). On November 19 a Palestinian rioter was killed by IDF fire in the Halhoul region (near Hebron) (NRG, November 20, 2012).



Left: Rioters in Bir Zeit burn an Israeli flag (Paltimes.net website, November 19, 2012). Right: A Hebron rally for solidarity Hamas (Safa News Agency, November 19, 2012).

## Lebanon

22. **According to Lebanese media reports, the Lebanese security forces found two 107mm rockets aimed at Israel and ready for launching**. They were located in the eastern sector of south Lebanon between the villages of Al-Mari and Halta. They were defused by the Lebanese security forces, which are currently trying to find those responsible for placing them (Al-Safir, Lebanon, November 19, 2012).

## Reactions in the Arab World

### Contacts in Cairo for a Ceasefire

23. In Cairo Egyptian efforts continue to broker a cease fire and reach an agreement for a long-term lull in the fighting between Israel on the one hand and Hamas and the other terrorist organizations operating in the Gaza Strip on the other. To that end, on November 19 **Raafat Shehata**, head of Egyptian General Intelligence met with, the Hamas leadership headed by Khaled Mashal and the PIJ leadership headed by Ramadan Shallah. The Egyptians met individually with each of the two delegations and with both delegations together (Al-Hayat, November 19, 2012).



**Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi (right) meets with Khaled Mashal (Al-Alam TV, November 19, 2012).**

24. On November 19 **UN Secretary General Ban-ki Moon arrived in Cairo** to support the Egyptian-led negotiations. On November 19 American President Barack Obama telephoned the Egyptian president to stress how important it was for the rocket fire from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory to cease, adding that he would keep in close contact with both the Egyptian president and the Israeli prime minister (White House website, November 19, 2012).

25. Senior Hamas and PIJ figures said **they were interested in a ceasefire, stressing that there was no rush:**

- 1) **Khaled Mashal**, head of Hamas' political bureau, said that Hamas was "**not interested in escalation**" and did not want to drag Israel into a ground war. However, he claimed that **Hamas would not fear a ground war** if forced to fight one. He said that "all possibilities were open," including the possibility of an

escalation. He added that Hamas was "ready for any eventuality, but hopes that the bloodletting will cease" (Al-Jazeera, November 19, 2012).

2) **Izzat al-Rishq**, a member of Hamas' political bureau, said that Hamas "does not want an all-out war, it will not help us, but we want a lull according to the conditions of the resistance [i.e., terrorist organizations]..." He said that Israel demanded, first of all, the end to rocket fire, while Hamas' conditions were the end of the targeted killings and the lifting of the siege of the Gaza Strip. He added that the terrorist organizations "were in no hurry" and were not eager for a lull, but rather were operating with a sense of security and [faith in] their ability to defend the Palestinian people (Al-Hayat, November 19, 2012).

3) "**A senior PIJ figure**" said he expected a lull within 24 hours. He said it had to include a mutual ceasefire, stopping the targeted killings and an arrangement for the issue of the crossings. He added that "we do not want an all-out war, nor does Hamas, but we have time..." (Al-Hayat, November 19, 2012).

### **The Battle for Hearts and Minds**

26. Hamas and the PIJ's main media themes over the past 24 hours were the following (expressed as well in a press conference given by Khaled Mashal on November 19):

- 1) Hamas and the PIJ want a ceasefire but not at any cost and they are not operating out of a sense of urgency.
- 2) Israel is killing children and civilians and carrying out "war crimes" to exert pressure on the Palestinian organizations.
- 3) A ground war will not be a picnic for the IDF. It will also be fatal for the Israeli prime minister.

### **The Fairy Tale Corner**

27. Hamas' media continue to spread disinformation for the sake of founding a "victory myth:"

- 1) On November 18 Hamas' Al-Aqsa TV announced that a Fajr-5 rocket landed 200 meters, or about 218 yards, from the American embassy in Tel Aviv, claiming to "quote the Israeli media".



Announcement of the Fajr-5 hit near the American embassy in Tel Aviv (Hamas' Al-Aqsa TV, November 18, 2012).

2) On November 18 Al-Aqsa TV announced that Ben-Gurion International Airport had been closed and its planes moved to a secret airfield in northern Israel, again claiming to "quote the Israeli media."



Announcement of the closing of Ben-Gurion International Airport (Hamas' Al-Aqsa TV, November 18, 2012).

3) On November 20 the Hamas website claimed that people in Tel Aviv were panic-stricken and that Israel (the "occupation") was begging for a ceasefire.

4) Hamas claimed that Israel was hiding the true number of civilians killed.

## Praising Iran for Its Military Support of the Palestinian Terrorist Organizations

28. Spokesmen for the PIJ and Hezbollah praised Iran for its military support of the Palestinians:

1) **Ziad al-Nahhala**, deputy secretary general of the PIJ, was asked by Al-Alam, the Iranian Arabic TV channel, about Fajr-5 rockets. He answered that **the rockets, which had brought victory to the Palestinians, had been provided by Iran**. Asked if the Palestinians would stop smuggling weapons into the Gaza Strip if a lull were agreed to, he answered vaguely that the PIJ was an independent body which armed itself to be able to defend itself (Al-Alam TV, November 19, 2012).

2) Hezbollah leader **Hassan Nasrallah**, speaking from his bunker in the southern suburb of Beirut, **praised Iran** and Syria for delivering weapons to the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip (Al-Manar TV, November 19, 2012):

A. He asked, rhetorically, how Fajr-5 rockets, Grad rockets and anti-tank missiles (Kornets and others) had reached the Gaza Strip. "Who sent them, despite the siege [on the Gaza Strip], and who delivered them?"

B. He answered that it was important to emphasize **the role of Iran and the role of Syria** in that context. He spoke with contempt of the countries which sent medicines to the Palestinians [i.e., Egypt] or gave them "paltry sums of money" [i.e., Qatar]. He stressed the importance of [Iranian and Syrian] military aid, **which enabled the Palestinian organizations to attack Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, to open fire on planes and boats and to destroy armored personnel carriers**. On the other hand, he said, the Arab countries which sent boatloads of weapons to the Syrian opposition did not have the courage to send even one bullet to the Gaza Strip.

C. The real challenge for the Arab-Muslim world, said Nasrallah, **was for the Arab and Muslim countries to have the courage to send weapons to the Gaza Strip starting today**. The Israelis, on the other hand, he said, were

gambling that the Gazans would run out of rockets (implying that that should not happen).

D. Nasrallah related to the alleged claim that Iran had abandoned Hamas because Hamas had left the "camp of the resistance." He said that **Iran, Syria and Hezbollah** would not abandon the Gaza Strip [i.e., the terrorist organizations operating there] and would **continue to meet their obligations** to it, even if certain political disagreements existed [a reference to the disagreements between Iran and Hamas regarding the rebellion in Syria and Hamas' opposition to the Syrian regime].

### **Flow of Delegations to the Gaza Strip**

29. **Arab delegations and public figures** continue streaming to the Gaza Strip to express solidarity provide humanitarian assistance, **especially delegations from Egypt**.

30. Noteworthy was the 60-man convoy which represented political forces in Egypt, headed by **Mohammed Saad Katanani**, head of the Freedom and Justice Party (the Muslim Brotherhood's political wing). The delegation entered the Gaza Strip on November 19 and was welcomed by senior figures of the de-facto Hamas administration and the Hamas Legislative Council. In addition, on November 18-19, 561 Egyptian political activists entered the Gaza Strip, as did a delegation of the Egyptian engineers union and three medical delegations of Egyptian and Arab doctors.