



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

December 19-25, 2012



Christians celebrate Christmas Eve in the courtyard of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem (Wafa News Agency, December 24, 2012).

Overview

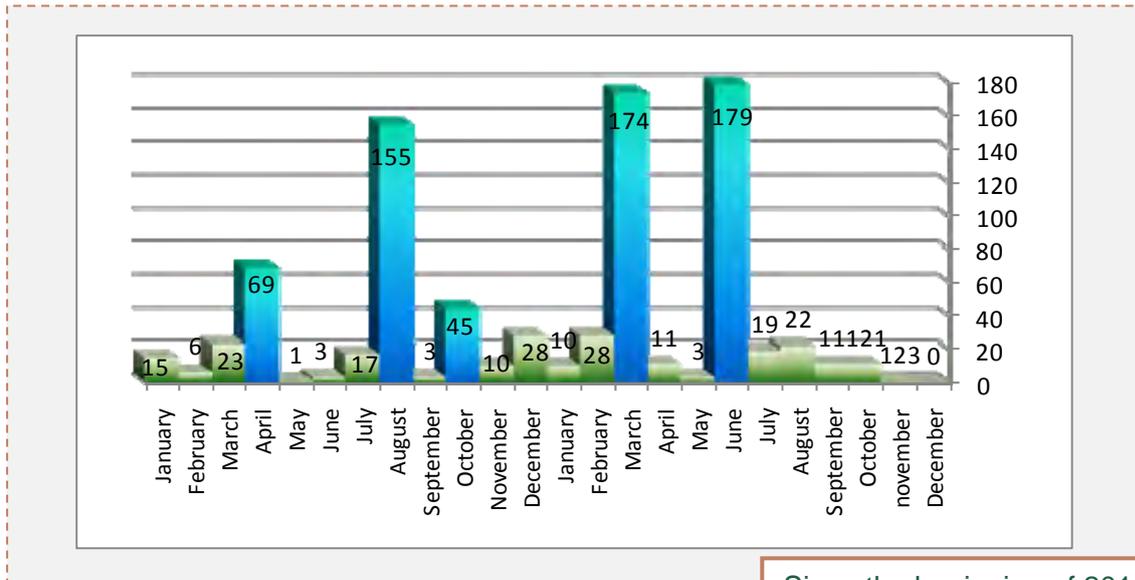
- The quiet in Israel's south continues. Since November 21 no rockets or mortar shells fired from the Gaza Strip have hit Israeli territory. Palestinian civilians continue defying IDF forces along the security fence between Israel and the Gaza Strip.
- This past week Palestinians twice attacked IDF soldiers in the Jerusalem region. Palestinian violence against Israelis in Judea and Samaria has been on the rise since Operation Pillar of Defense and especially since the UN upgraded the status of the Palestinian Authority.

The Gaza Strip Rocket Fire

■ Hamas and the other terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip continue to implement the understandings reached at the end of Operation Pillar of Defense.

Since 2300 hours on November 21 no rockets or mortar shells hit Israeli territory.

Rocket Hits in Israeli Territory since the Beginning of 2011¹

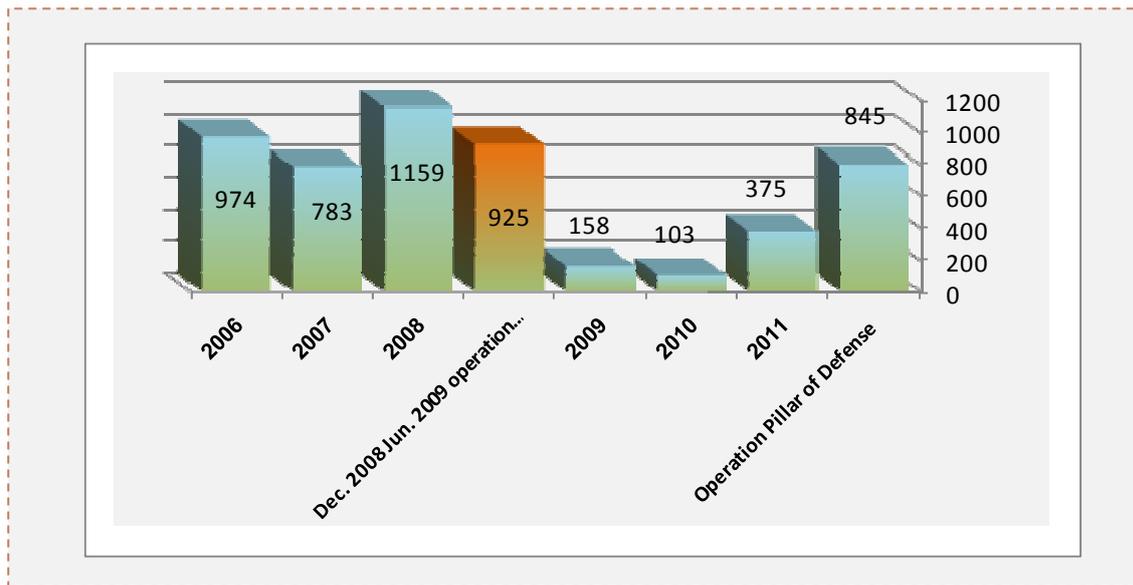


Since the end of Operation Cast Lead, 2,298 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory.

Since the beginning of 2011, 2,197 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory; 1,822 since the beginning of 2012.

¹ As of December 25, 2012. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire²



Palestinian Wounded near the Security Fence

■ After a short interlude of quiet, there was another defiant gathering of Palestinians who were not agricultural workers near the security fence in the northern Gaza Strip. The IDF force attempted to disperse them by firing for crowd dispersal. When that did not help, the force fired at the legs of the Palestinians (Ynet, December 21, 2012). According to Palestinian reports, five Palestinians were wounded.

■ Following the incident, senior figures in Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad accused Israel of "violating the understandings" reached at the end of Operation Pillar of Defense. However, **Mahmoud al-Zahar** said that it was unnecessary to respond to "little violations" by one of the sides, but added that violations demanded a response and that Hamas would have to discuss the issue with Egypt (Safa News Agency, December 21, 2012). On the other hand, **Musa Abu Marzouq**, deputy chairman of Hamas' Executive Committee, said that at any given moment the continuation of "Israeli violations" was liable to bring about the collapse of the agreement (Alresala.net website, December 23, 2012).

² The statistics for 2008 and 2009 include rocket hits identified during Operation Cast Lead. They do not include mortar shell fire.

Judea and Samaria

Increase in Violence in Judea and Samaria

Overview

■ This past week as well Palestinian attacks on IDF soldiers continued. The anti-Israeli violence in Judea and Samaria has steadily risen **since Operation Pillar of Defense**, and especially **since the PA's status in the UN was upgraded**. There has been an increase in the number of stones and Molotov cocktails thrown, as well as attempts to attack Israeli security force personnel.

■ Two of the more glaring incidents were the following:

- **December 23** – A Palestinian taxi driver hit a Border Police policeman at the entrance to the police station in Jabel Mukaber in southeast Jerusalem, causing minor wounds. An investigation revealed that the taxi driver, a Jabel Mukaber resident, had driven to the police station in his car. Not having been permitted to enter, he rammed his car into a vehicle which was leaving the parking lot. A Border Police policeman stationed at the entrance approached the taxi driver to speak to him but the taxi driver backed up and hit the policeman with his car, causing minor wounds. The Palestinian taxi driver was also shot and wounded in the leg and evacuated for medical treatment (Ynet, December 23, 2012).
- **December 21** – An IDF soldier was attacked and his weapon was stolen while he was on guard at the Al-Ram roadblock north of Jerusalem. An initial investigation revealed that two Palestinians came to the post, attacked the soldier by hitting him on the head, spraying pepper spray in his face and threatening him with a fake gun. They grabbed his weapon and fled the scene (Ynet, December 21, 2012).



A Palestinian youth throws stones at an IDF force in the village of Qadoum (Wafa News Agency, December 21, 2012).

Tel Aviv Bus-Bombing Terrorist Network Exposed

■ It was recently revealed that in November the Israel Police Force and the Israel Security Agency detained a terrorist squad from the Ramallah region whose members had carried out the terrorist attack on a bus in Tel Aviv during Operation Pillar of Defense (November 21, 2012). Under questioning the terrorist operatives revealed that **they belonged to Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and had been planning additional terrorist attacks**. They planned, among other things, to shoot IDF soldiers in Judea and Samaria and to carry out suicide bombing attacks, also targeting mayors and senior Israeli government figures (Israel Security Agency website, December 19, 2012).

■ The investigation revealed that the head of the network had **increased his efforts to carry out the attack when Operation Pillar of Defense began**. Tel Aviv was chosen as the site of the attack and an Israeli Arab was used to place the explosive device on the bus.

■ Four of the detained terrorist operatives admitted their complicity in the bus attack and will be brought to trial. They are (Israel Security Agency website, December 19, 2012) :

- **Ahmed Salah Ahmed Musa**, network head, born 1987, resident of Beit Lakiya (about 20 miles north of Jerusalem), **Hamas terrorist operative**. Ahmed Musa was previously imprisoned in Israel for planning terrorist attacks. He commanded the network and put together the explosive device, which he learned

to do from **instructions on a website**. He also bought weapons and experimented with detonating explosive devices.

- **Muhammad Abd al-Jaa'far Nasser Mafarja**, born 1994, Israeli citizen residing in Beit Lakiya. Recruited to Hamas in September 2012. On the morning of the terrorist attack he received the explosive device to place on a bus in Tel Aviv. When he arrived in Tel Aviv he walked around looking for a suitable bus. At around 11:55 he put the device on a bus. As soon as he got off he reported back to Ahmed Musa, **who detonated the explosive device by means of a cell phone attached to it**.
- **Fouad Rabah Shakri A'asi**, born 1985, resident of Beit Lakiya. **Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorist operative**, was imprisoned in Israel a number of times for recruiting terrorist networks and carrying out terrorist attacks. He provided the materials for assembling the explosive device. Ahmed Musa, network head, also tried to enlist him to carry out a suicide bombing attack.
- **Muhammad Mahfouz Sayid Darma**, born 1987, resident of Mazraat Nubani (near Ramallah), **Hamas terrorist operative**. In charge of enlisting suicide bombers for the network from among the students of Beir Zeit University.

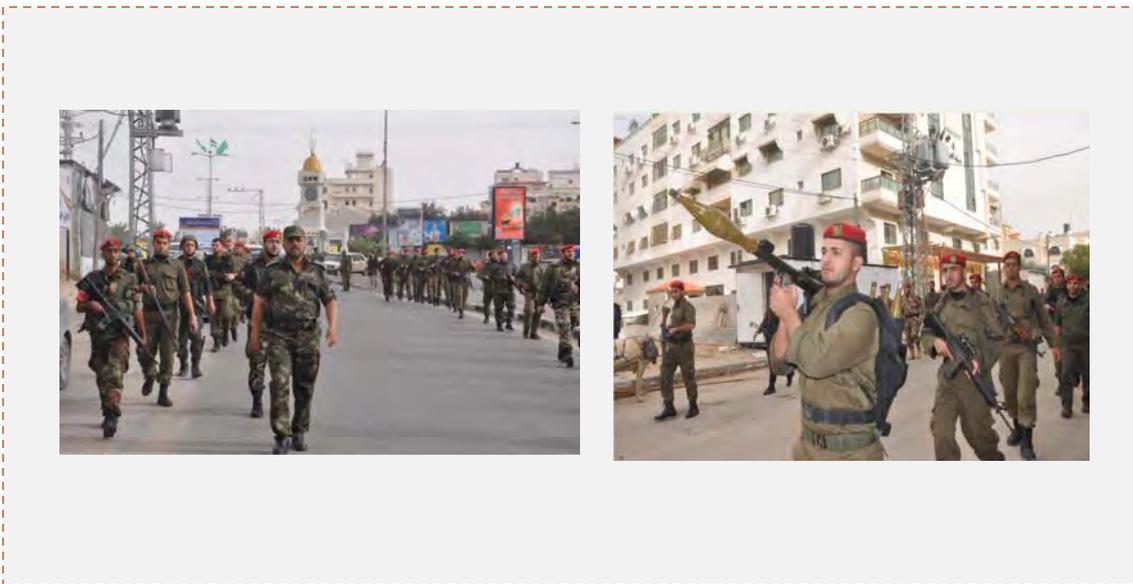


The bus in Tel Aviv after the explosion. Twenty-seven people were wounded in the terrorist attack, three of them seriously (Facebook page of the Israel Police, November 21, 2012).

The Situation in the Gaza Strip

Military Display of the National Security Network in the Gaza Strip

■ The national security network of the de-facto Hamas administration held a military display in the streets of Gaza City. Before it began the operatives met with Abu Obeida al-Jarrah, the national security commander. The operatives marched through the streets armed with light arms and RPG launchers (Hamas forum website, December 20, 2012). The display was apparently intended to **demonstrate the ability of the de-facto Hamas administration to control the Gaza Strip after Operation Pillar of Defense.**



Military display held in the streets of Gaza City by the national security network (Hamas forum website, December 20, 2012)

Operation Pillar of Defense – Aftermath

Speech by Fathi Hamad, Minister of the Interior of the Hamas Administration

■ Speaking before employees of the Hamas ministry of the interior after Operation Pillar of Defense, **Fathi Hamad**, minister of the interior, said that creative ways had to be found to get rid of Israel, which he referred to as a "cancer." He admitted that during Operation Pillar of Defense 25 operatives who belonged to the ministry of the interior had been killed. **He also said that the ministry of the interior collaborated with the military wings of the Palestinian [terrorist] organizations** and called on the Arab countries to send money to "Palestinian jihad fighters" so they could purchase

weapons which could be used to "humiliate the enemies of Allah" (Al-Aqsa TV, December 5, 2012).

Delegations Continue to Arrive in the Gaza Strip

■ Delegations continue to arrive in the Gaza Strip in the wake of Operation Pillar of Defense. Some of them bring aid and others come for purposes of documenting damage done during the operation in preparation for possible legal action:

- On **December 20** a delegation arrived in the Gaza Strip from Turkey representing the Turkish Great Union Party (the Büyük Birlik Partisi, BBP, a relatively small Islamist party). One member of the delegation was a member of the IHH directorate. The members of the delegation met with Ismail Haniya, head of the de-facto Hamas administration, who said that many countries supported the Gaza Strip but Turkey had supported it with the "blood of the *Mavi Marmara* shaheeds" (Ma'an News Agency, December 20, 2012).
- On December 25 a medical aid delegation sent by the Turkish government's International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) was expected to enter the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing. According to Mohamed Murtaja, head of TIKA representation in the Gaza Strip, the delegation brought 70 tons of medical equipment, according to a list his organization has received from the Hamas administration's ministry of health (Anadolu News Agency, Turkey, December 24, 2012).



Medical aid from the Turkish government's TIKA on its way to the Gaza Strip (Anadolu News Agency, Turkey, December 24, 2012).

- The Greek Ship to Gaza delegation which arrived in the Gaza Strip, invited by the Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR), visited PCHR headquarters. Members of the delegation met with the organization's director, **Raji Sorani**, who briefed them on the so-called "violations" of the terms of the ceasefire achieved at the end of Operation Pillar of Defense. He also reported on the PCHR's initiative to bring suit against Israel in the International Criminal Court (ICC) (PCHR website, December 3, 2012). The PCHR is well-known as leading the lawfare against Israel. Its members supplied the Goldstone Commission with biased, false information after Operation Cast Lead and now, after Operation Pillar of Defense, the organization is trying to bring suit against Israel or Israelis in various international judicial forums.

According to a Human Rights Watch Report, Palestinian Rocket Fire into Israeli Territory Violated International Law

■ Human Rights Watch issued a report stating that "Palestinian armed groups" [i.e., the terrorist organizations] had violated the laws of war during Operation Pillar of Defense by firing 1,500 rockets into Israeli territory of which, according to the report, about 60 exploded in population centers. According to the organization, firing rockets from the Gaza Strip into Israel is **a violation of international law**. "Palestinian armed groups made clear in their statements that harming civilians was their aim," said Sarah Leah Whitson, Middle East director at Human Rights Watch. "There is simply no legal justification for launching rockets at populated areas." The report also stated that the terrorist organizations fired rockets from within densely populated civilian areas near houses, exposing the Palestinian population to Israeli counter fire for the rockets fired into Israeli territory (Human Rights Watch website, December 24, 2012).

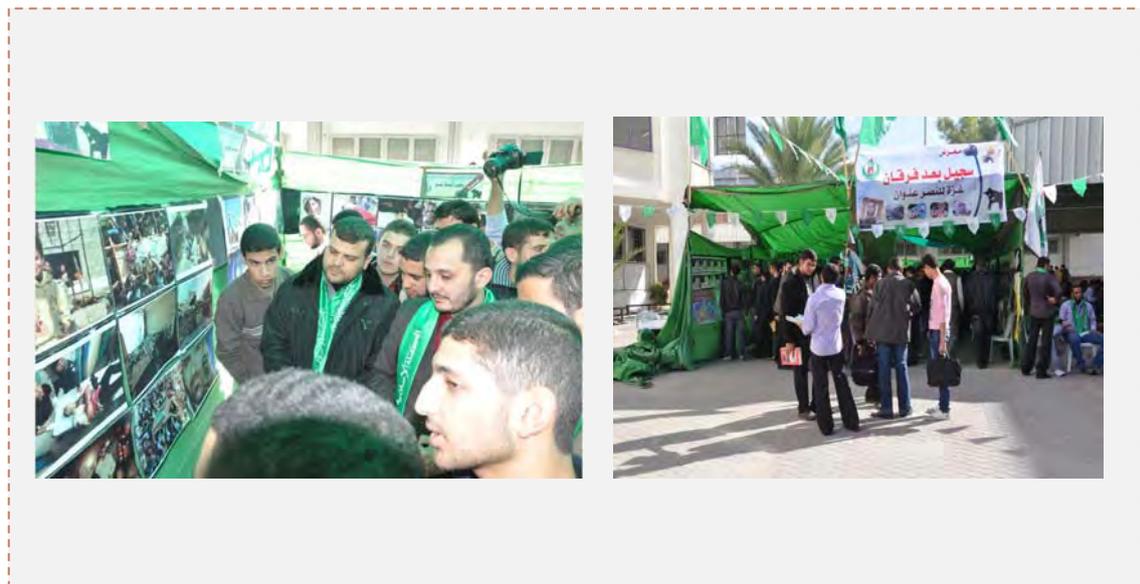
■ **The report also related to Iran's military support for the Palestinian terrorist organizations.** It noted that in addition to rockets manufactured by the Palestinians themselves, Hamas military-terrorist wing stated that it had fired an Iran-made Fajr-5 rocket (Human Rights Watch website, December 24, 2012). **Note:** Senior Hamas and PIJ figures publicly boasted that Iran was responsible for the military support, including Fajr-5 rockets, the Palestinian [terrorist] organizations had received.

■ Responding to the report, **Abu Obeida**, spokesman for the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, said that Hamas' military wing attacked only Israeli military bases and that Israel hid the fact, claiming that civilians had been harmed. He added that the rockets fired by Hamas' military wing were in response to Israeli fire (Abu Obeida's Twitter, December 24, 2012). **His statement was false. Hamas and the other terrorist**

organizations in the Gaza Strip not only fired rockets at Israeli civilian population centers, they repeatedly bragged about it.

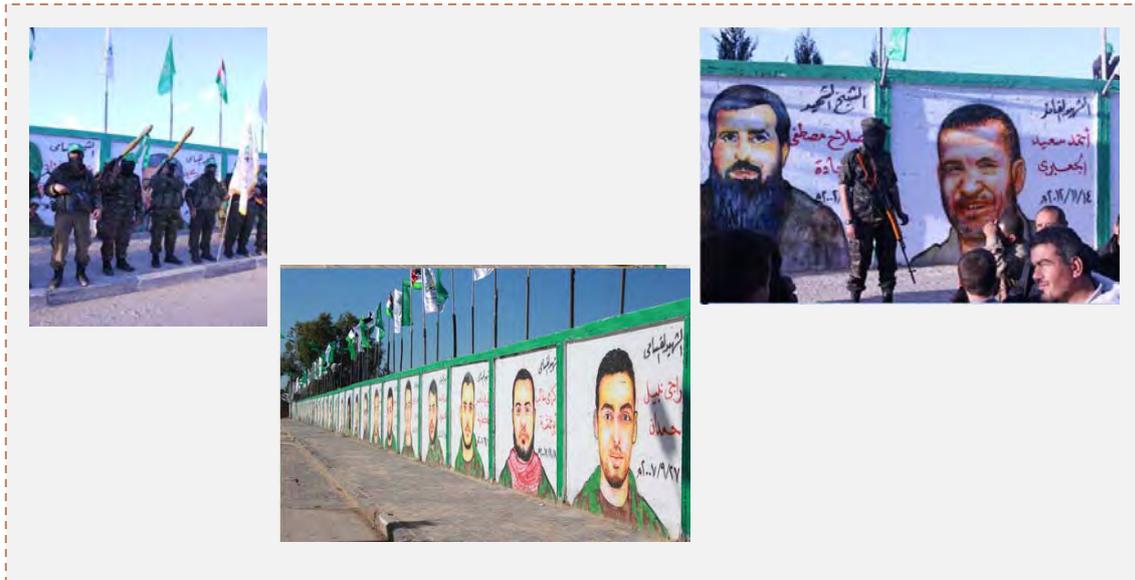
Perpetuating and Inculcating the "Victory Narrative"

■ On December 19, in the wake of Operation Pillar of Defense, the Islamic Block (Hamas' student organization) in Gaza City's Al-Azhar University opened a picture exhibition. More than 300 photographs were displayed, taken by Palestinians who covered the operation. According to the organizers, the exhibition's goal was to "embarrass Israel." The opening was attended by Ihab al-Ghusein, director of the Hamas administration's bureau of information, and the heads of the university (Hamas forum website, December 19, 2012).



The picture exhibition at Al-Azhar University (Hamas forum website, December 19, 2012).

■ In the town of Beit Hanoun on December 19, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military-terrorist wing, inaugurated a **wall featuring the pictures of senior terrorist operatives who had been killed by the IDF over the years**. Among them were Ahmed Yassin, Ahmed al-Jaabari and Salah Shhadeh. The ceremony was attended by Hamas terrorist operatives.



Hamas' military-terrorist wing inaugurates a wall in Beit Hanoun featuring its operatives killed by Israel (Hamas forum website, December 19, 2012).

The Palestinian Authority

Easing Restrictions on the Palestinian Population for Christmas

■ For Christmas and the New Year, the IDF and the unit of the coordinator of government activities in the territory eased restrictions on Palestinians entering or passing through Israel, as follows (IDF Spokesman, December 19, 2012):

- **20,000 entrance permits into Israel** were issued for the Christian population in Judea and Samaria.
 - **200 exit permits** were issued for Ben-Gurion International Airport and 300 permits were issued for visits to Judea and Samaria for non-resident Palestinians.
 - **Organized tours of Israel** for residents of Judea and Samaria were authorized.
 - The **entrance of 500 Palestinian Christians from the Gaza Strip into Israel, Judea and Samaria** to visit their families and attend religious services was authorized.
- It was also determined that IDF, Israel Police and civilian administration forces would be deployed at the checkpoints in the Bethlehem region to facilitate the entrance of Christians planning to participate in religious events in the city.

The Issue of the Construction in the Settlements

■ Senior members of the Palestinian Authority continue to issue statements about the announcement made by the Israeli prime minister about continuing construction in the settlements, threatening to appeal to international forums.

- At a Fatah advisory council meeting **Mahmoud Abbas** repeatedly stated that construction in area E1 was illegitimate and a "red line" the Palestinians did not intend to let Israel cross. He said the planned building would separate north Judea and Samaria from the south and divide the Palestinian territory into two parts, sabotaging the two-state solution (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, December 23, 2012). Speaking in Bethlehem at a Christmas dinner, he called on Israel to stop construction and return to negotiations according to international decisions (Wafa News Agency, December 24, 2012).



Mahmoud Abbas at a meeting of Fatah's advisory council in Ramallah (Wafa News Agency, December 22, 2012).

- **Riyadh al-Maliki**, PA foreign minister, said that the PA was currently seeking international support to stop the construction in the settlements and Israeli policies in the territories (Al-Quds, December 20, 2012).
- **Nimer Hamad**, Mahmoud Abbas' political advisor, said that if the European Union did not prevent the construction from continuing the PA's leadership would appeal to the International Court in The Hague (Voice of Palestine Radio, December 21, 2012).
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Lebanon

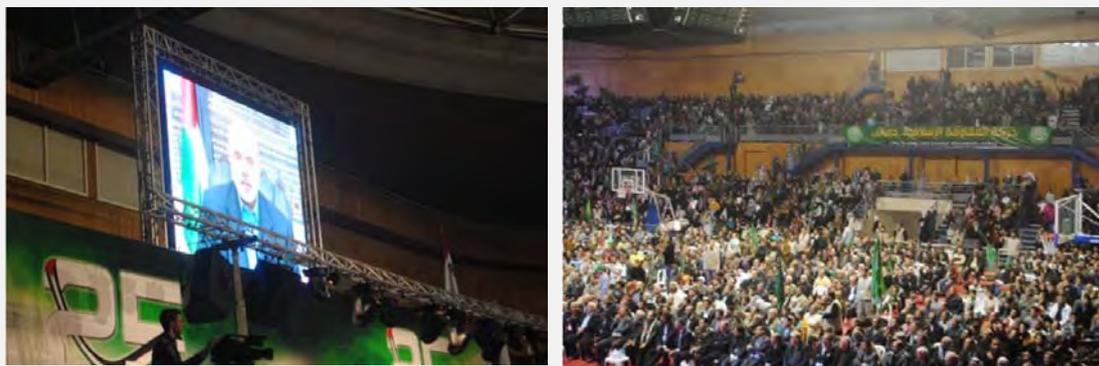
Hamas Weapons Storehouse Explodes

■ On the morning of December 17 there was an explosion in the vicinity of the village of **Tayr Harfa** in the western sector of south Lebanon (about 2.5 kilometers, or about 1.5 miles, from the Israeli border). Apparently **an underground Hezbollah ammunition storehouse had exploded**. Three houses were destroyed in the blast. The IDF asked UNIFIL to send a team to investigate. About two hours later UNIFIL and Lebanese army forces arrived at the region where the explosion occurred but Hezbollah operatives, who had immediately sealed off the area, prevented them from approaching the site of the explosion. A short time later the site was cleared (IDF Spokesman, December 20, 2012).

■ **Israel lodged a complaint with the UN Security Council**. It was the **fourth time** a cache of Hezbollah weapons in south Lebanon had exploded in recent years. The existence of weapons caches are a violation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701, passed after the Second Lebanon War, forbidding Hezbollah to have arms in south Lebanon.

Rally in Beirut to Mark the Founding of Hamas

■ The Hamas movement in Lebanon held a rally in Beirut on December 23 to mark the 25th anniversary of its founding. The rally was attended by senior Lebanese and Palestinian figures. A speech was made by **Ali Barakeh**, Hamas representative in Lebanon. Ismail Haniya, head of the de-facto Hamas administration, gave a speech broadcast on a giant screen. He stressed that the "option of resistance [i.e., terrorism] is Hamas' strategic option" and that it could be used "to realize the right of return and release the prisoners." Addressing the Lebanese he said that "today you celebrate in Lebanon and tomorrow the party will be in Jerusalem" (Shihab, December 23, 2012).



Hamas rally in Beirut making the 25th anniversary of its founding. Right: Ismail Haniya gives a televised speech (Shihab, December 23, 2012).

Propaganda Events

Gaza's Ark Asks for Funds

■ The Gaza's Ark project website posted a call asking for money. According to the organizer, so far they have raised \$35,000, but to realize the initiative they need at least \$25,000 more. The organizers are exploiting the holiday season to raise the sum (Gaza's Ark website, December 22, 2012). The aim of the project is to build a ship in the Gaza Strip which will sail loaded with Palestinian products and in that way to break the so-called Israeli naval "blockade" of the Gaza Strip.