



Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center  
at the Center for Special Studies (C.S.S)

## News of the Israeli-Palestinian Confrontation

(January 1-15, 2006)



Terrorist elements in Lebanon continue their attempts to send arms and ammunition to terrorist organizations operating in the Gaza Strip.

The photographs show a ship captured by the Lebanese army, carrying arms and ammunition bound for the Gaza Strip

(Al-Manar Television, January 8).

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### **Main points**

- The escalation of Qassam rocket fire on Israeli populated areas in the Negev, begun in the previous month, continues. The IDF persisted with its preventive activities, which included shooting at the launching sites and their access routes, and the killing (by an air strike) of a terrorist operative who stood behind the rocket fire.
- The Hamas movement, which participates the coming elections to the Legislative Council, reiterated its familiar positions of non-recognition of the State of Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian agreements, and its intention to continue the violent confrontation with Israel (even though several Hamas operatives attempted to soften or diminish the significance of such messages). At the same time, Hamas' political platform includes a call for government reforms within Palestinian politics and society, striking a chord with the Palestinian people, who have grown tired of anarchy and corruption.

## Important events

### The escalation of Qassam rocket fire on Negev towns continues

- The past two weeks have seen the continuation of Qassam and mortar fire on Israeli territory. During the two weeks, 40 hits were registered (in practice, there were additional, unregistered hits, some of which inside the Gaza Strip territory). Claims of responsibility for the fire were published mainly by Fatah's Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad ( Hamas' claims of responsibility have remained conspicuously absent).
- It should be noted that during the month of the disengagement (August) and the three subsequent months, there was a **drop** in the number of Qassam rocket and mortar shell attacks from the Gaza Strip, after the peak reached in July (221 incidents). In **December 2005** , there was a considerable **increase** in the number of incidents (91), **which has continued into the first half of January 2006**.
- In response to the Qassam rocket and mortar shell attacks, the IDF has continued to carry out air strikes against the launching sites. Within this context, the Israeli Air Force has carried out in the past two weeks several attacks on targets in the Gaza Strip, focusing on the launching sites' access routes.
- At the same time, **criticism over the rocket and mortar fire and its perpetrators** continues by Palestinian Authority seniors and the Palestinian population. Thus, for example, Yasser Abd Rabo, a member of the PLO Executive Committee, stated that the rocket fire was not considered to be “resistance” and that the rockets became a “tragic and comic” phenomenon: on one hand, they do not hit their targets, and on the other, they inflict damage upon the Palestinian population (Al-Khalij, January 9). Furthermore, it was reported that a Palestinian from Beit Lahiya, who tried to prevent a Palestinian Islamic Jihad cell from firing rockets, was shot dead by the cell members (Palestinian Interior Ministry website, January 1).



The escalation of Qassam rocket fire on Israeli territory continues.

The photograph shows the preparation of a Qassam rocket before it is launched on Kibbutz Zikim

(Al-Jazeera Television, December 22)

### Killing of a senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad operative

- On January 1, the IDF carried out an air strike on the Jebaliya refugee camp (northern Gaza Strip), targeting a vehicle driven by a senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad operative. **Sa'id Abd al-Fattah Ibrahim Judyan**, who had been involved in Qassam rocket and mortar shell attacks on Israeli targets in the past several weeks, was killed in the air strike.
- The killed terrorist operative, Sa'id Judyan, a 41-year-old resident of Beit Lahiya, had served a prison term in Israel (1997-2002) due to his activity in the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Following his release, he resumed terrorist activities and became one of the most prominent operatives in northern Gaza Strip. He was involved in planning and guiding various kinds of terrorist attacks. In the past several weeks, he was in charge of a cell in northern Gaza Strip that engaged in rocket fire on Israel.



Attack on a senior terrorist operative in Jebaliya (Al-Jazeera, January 2)

### Arrest of a senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad operative in the Jenin region

- During an operation carried out on January 10 in the town of Qabatiya (south of Jenin), Israeli security forces arrested **Imad al-Din Shawkat Aref Kamil**, a 22-year-old town resident, senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad operative. A Kalashnikov rifle and ammunition were seized at his house.
- The terrorist rose to prominence following the killings and arrests of the organization's senior figures during the past several months. He had contact with Palestinian Islamic Jihad operatives in the West Bank as well as with elements outside the Palestinian Authority administered territories, **from whom he received guidance and funding for planning terrorist attacks.**

### Partial lift of the closure imposed on Palestinian population in the West Bank

- Israel decided to partially lift, as of January 14, the closure imposed on Palestinian population in the West Bank region (it was imposed in December 2005 in the wake of the killing of an IDF soldier at a roadblock south of Tulkarm by a suicide bomber). Within this context:
  - 10,000 Palestinian workers were granted permission to enter and work in Israeli territory.
  - 1,700 employees of international organizations were granted permission to enter Israel , of whom 350 were granted entry permits to the Gaza Strip.
  - 300 workers were allowed to enter and work in East Jerusalem

## Terrorism from Lebanon

### Arrest of Al-Qaeda operatives by Lebanon's security forces

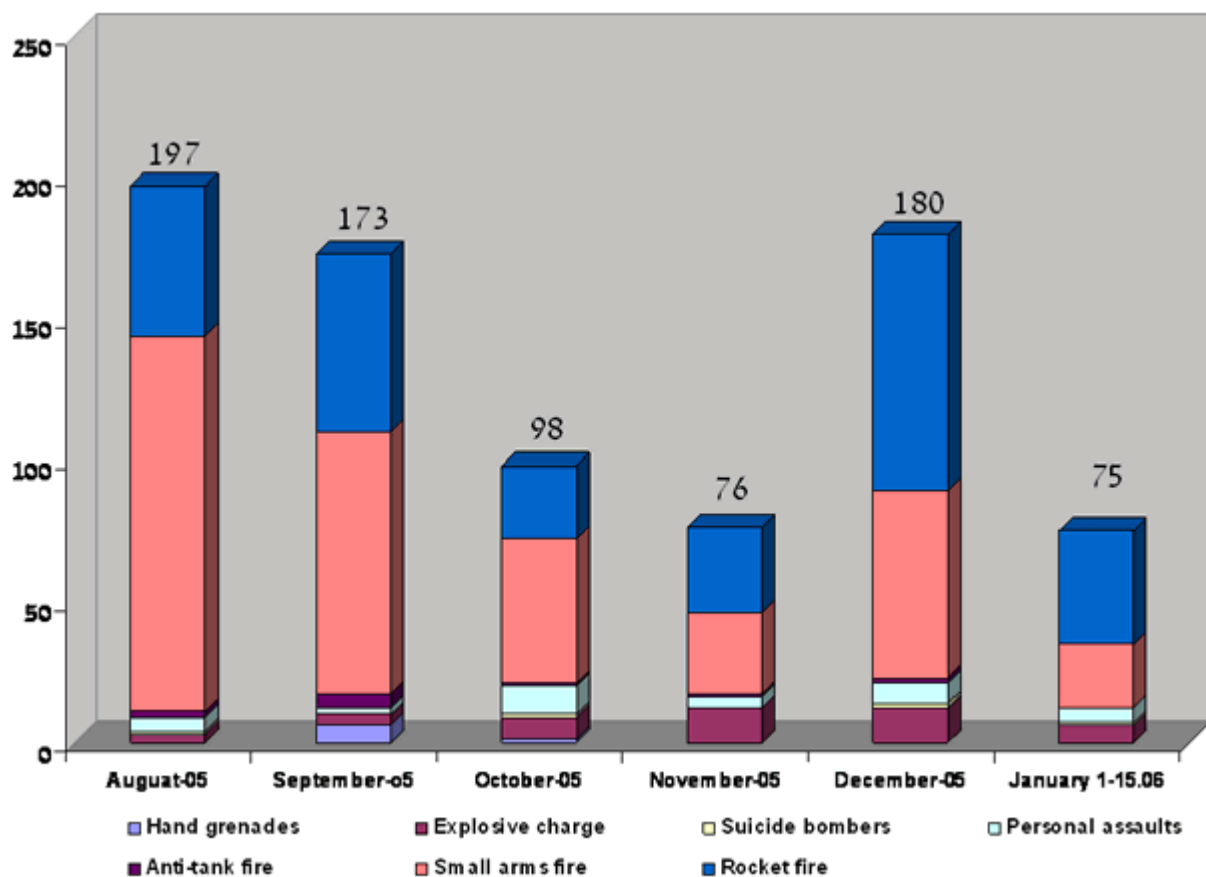
- The Lebanese security forces arrested 13 Al-Qaeda operatives (seven Syrians, three Lebanese, a Saudi, a Jordanian, and a Palestinian). The Lebanese authorities withheld information on the circumstances surrounding the arrest of the group, which had probably planned to set up a terrorist infrastructure in Lebanon . During questioning, it became evident that the group members were involved in acquisition of arms and possession of false documentation (Al-Safir, January 13). An inquiry was opened and charges were pressed against the group members. It is possible that the detainees belong to the organization of Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi, the Al-Qaeda leader in Iraq , and had recently moved to Lebanon after briefly operating inside Syrian territory.
- It should be noted that on December 29, Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi's organization issued a claim of responsibility for the rocket fire on Israel conducted from Lebanese territory (night of December 27-28). It was perpetrated by Palestinian elements affiliated with the global jihad (see below). We are not clear, at this point, whether the Al-Qaeda group members, recently apprehended by the Lebanese security forces, were those who had stood behind the rocket fire on Israel .

## Lebanese navy seizes terrorist ship bound for the Gaza Strip

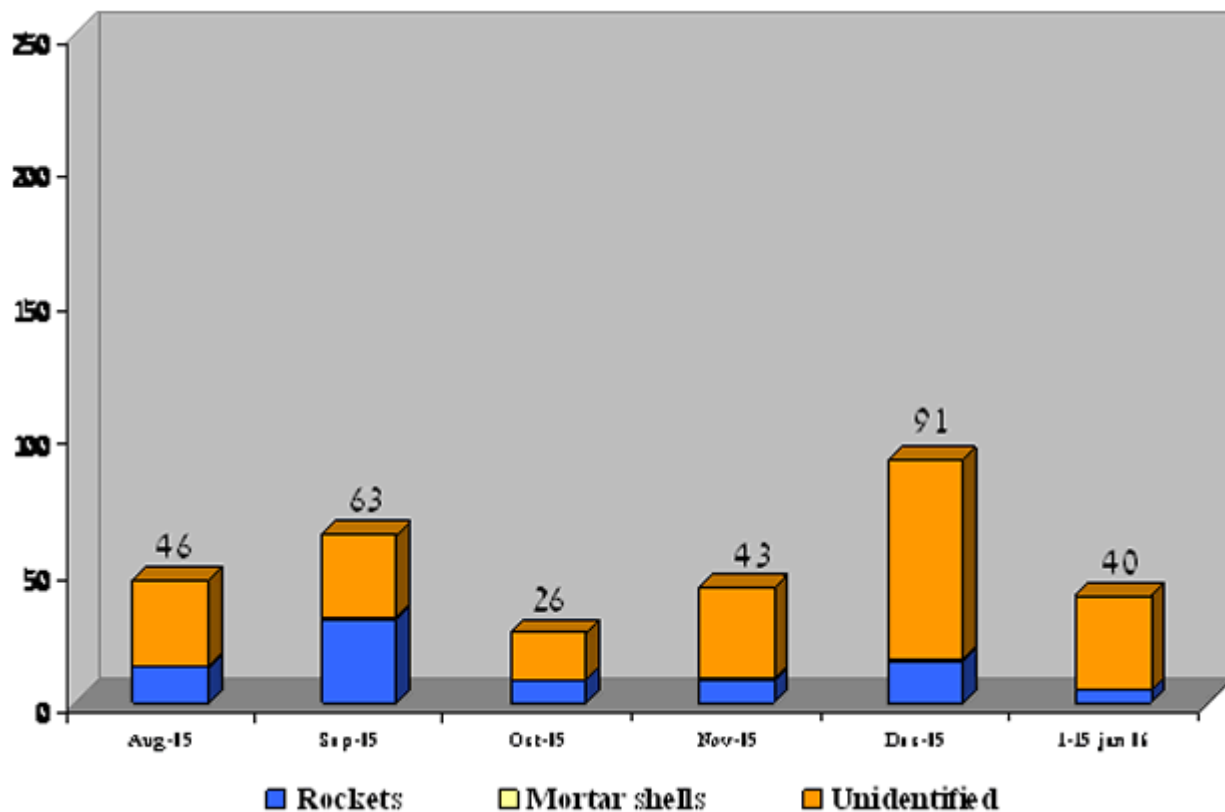
- On January 6, a Lebanese navy boat patrolling the region of Tripoli beach in northern Lebanon seized a ship loaded with arms and ammunition bound for the Gaza Strip. The cargo seized on board included various kinds of explosives, electric detonators, RPG rockets, and hand grenades. The ship had been bound from the Nahr al-Bared Palestinian refugee camp. The four Palestinians on board the ship escaped but were subsequently caught, on January 7, by the Lebanese army (Al-Hayat, January 12).
- At this point, it is unclear which organization was responsible for dispatching the ship. A Lebanese source told an Al-Hayat reporter (January 12) that the four detainees had confessed that a senior terrorist from ' **Usbat al-Ansar** (League of the [Prophet's] Followers) was the one who had dispatched the ship to the Gaza Strip.
- '**Usbat al-Ansar** is a Palestinian organization with **radical Islamic ideology**, operating in Lebanon, mainly in the Ein el-Hilweh refugee camp. The organization is linked to global jihad elements, including Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi's organization. Recently, this organization was involved in firing rockets on Israel (night of December 27-28).

## Statistical Data

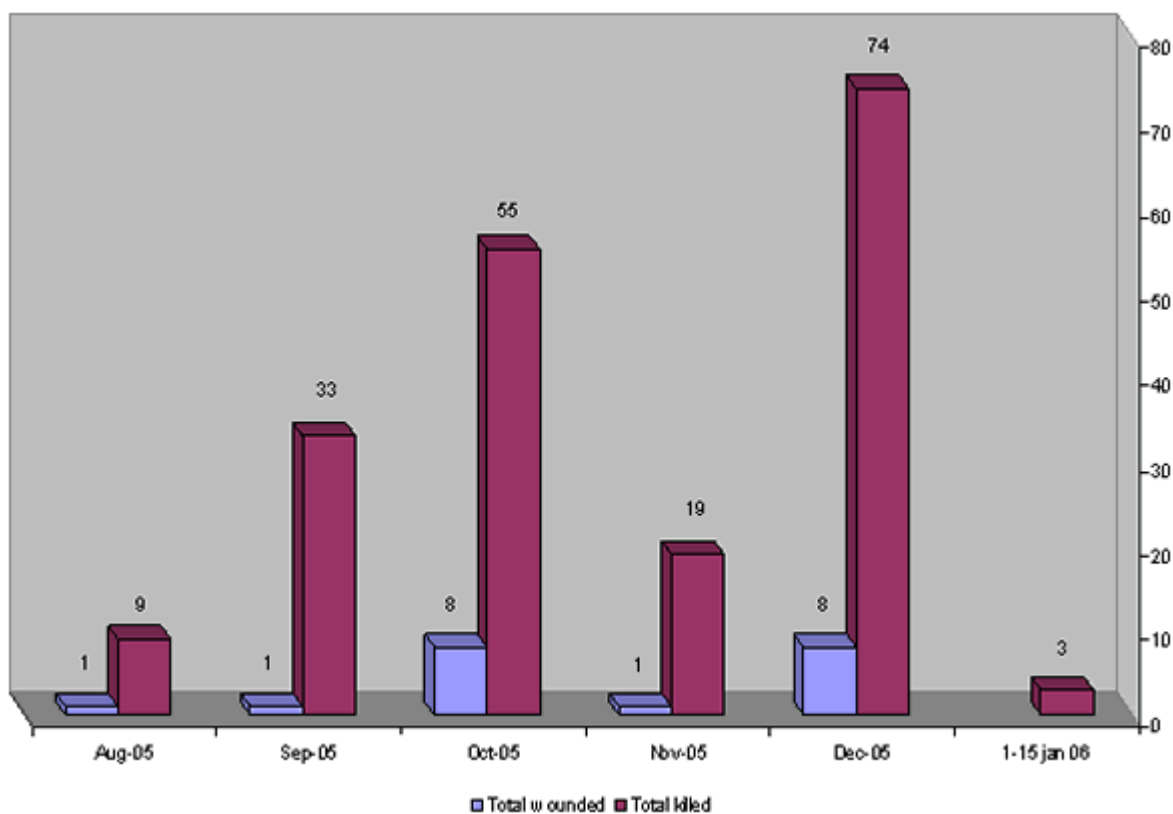
### Monthly distribution of the attacks



**Monthly distribution of Qassam rocket and mortar fire (since the disengagement)**



**Monthly distribution of Israeli casualties**



## The Internal Palestinian Arena

### The pre-election Hamas platform expresses the movement's non-recognition of the State of Israel and its intention to continue the violent confrontation with Israel, while calling for reforms within Palestinian politics and society.

- On the eve of elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council, Hamas issued its official platform via its Internet site, which states the movement's well-known, basic militant position regarding Israel . At the same time, it calls for administrative and legal reforms inside Palestine . The Palestinians, who are fed up with corruption and anarchy, are a receptive audience for such messages.
- Following are the main planks of the platform:
  - **principles** : the Palestinian people are part of the Arab-Muslim nation. Islam is the source of political, economic, social and legal authority. **Palestine is an integral part of the Arab-Islamic land and the Palestinian people have an inalienable right to that land** . The Palestinian people have the right to self determination, to Jerusalem and to the [Islamic] holy places, and to establish a sovereign state whose capital is Jerusalem . **The right of return is given to all refugees and displaced persons** . The Palestinian people **have the right to use and all means in to end the [Israeli] occupation, including the right to an armed confrontation** .
  - **Internal politics** : Hamas calls for administrative and legal reforms (its slogan is "Change and Reform"). Its platform includes the principles of preservation of individual and collective liberty, struggle against corruption through transparency and inspection of budget management, and defense of civil institutions, economic aid to the weak strata, creation of social solidarity and securing of the economic rights of prisoners. Regarding education, the platform calls for a compulsory education law and determines that **Islam** is the basis for education. It also calls for an improvement in the status of women.
  - **Foreign policy** : Hamas calls for a strengthening of ties with the Arab-Muslim world while preserving relations with the international community. It supports the "resistance" [i.e., the continuation of terrorism], the effort to achieve Arab and international legitimization for "the struggle against the occupation" [i.e., a continuation of the armed confrontation] and the "economic disengagement" from Israel .
- An article in the January 14 issue of the Egyptian daily newspaper Al-Ahram criticized the Hamas platform, calling it an "extremist ideology" based on negating the other side, causing hatred between peoples and an obstacle to achieving peace. It called upon Hamas to recognize Israel and not to use the slogan "the destruction of Israel " in its election propaganda.
- According to Mahmoud al-Zahar, a senior Hamas operative, even if the movement participated in the Legislative Council, **it would not recognize the State of Israel or any agreements Israel signed with the Palestinian Authority (PA)**. He stated that the Izzedine al-Qassam Battalions (Hamas's terrorist-operative wing) **would remain armed** and would even increase its operational capabilities. He noted that even after Hamas was elected to the Legislative Council, it would encourage the Palestinian security forces and the other [terrorist] organizations to **continue the fight against Israel** (Palestinian News Agency, January 14). **Ismail Hania** , also a Hamas spokesman, stated that at the current time, the "resistance activities" [i.e., continued terrorism against Israel ] were most important, and only in the future would Hamas deal with political activities (Al-Aqsa Radio, January 13).





Mahmoud al-Zahar: no recognition for Israel and the armed “resistance” continues  
(Hamas Internet site, January 15).

- Nevertheless, because of the approaching election, elements within Hamas have tried to soften or dull the messages which reflect Hamas's true position. For example, Muhammad Abu Teir, a resident of Abu Tuba (east of Jerusalem ) and second on the Hamas list of candidates for the Legislative Council, said that his movement did not reject contacts with Israel .<sup>1</sup> Ghazi Hamid, a Hamas candidate from the Rafah district, said that the Hamas platform recognized the establishment of a temporary state Palestinian withing the 1967 borders and that recognition of Israel would not be a short-term option.

### Anarchy in the PA-administered territories continues

- Despite the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha, anarchy continues in the PA-administered territories, particularly in the Gaza Strip, where almost total chaos reigns. Armed Palestinian gunmen continue attacking offices and facilities identified with the PA in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
- Most severe was the violent incident with Egyptian forces at the Rafah border crossing (January 4). A band of armed Palestinians belonging to Fatah/Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades tried to break through into Egypt along the Philadelphi route in protest of the arrest of one of their leaders (who was suspected of being involved in the abduction of the three British citizens on December 31, 2005 ). The armed men closed the Rafah border crossing for a number of hours and took control of four government buildings (A.P.).



Eid al-Adha in the shadow of anarchy: Abu Mazen (left)  
participating in the holiday prayer (Palestinian TV, January 10).

- During the incident two Egyptian soldiers were killed and 25 wounded. Three Palestinians were wounded when the Egyptians returned fire. Egypt imposed a closure along the Philadelphi route and demanded that the PA send forces to the area immediately to put a stop to the shooting. The incident was condemned by the Palestinian street. Fatah and Hamas (whose operatives have themselves been involved in the ongoing anarchy) organized processions to protest the anarchy and the killing of the two Egyptian soldiers (Palestinian TV and Ramatan News Agency, January 6).

<sup>1</sup> In the meantime, Abu Teir has denied the reports printed in the Israeli daily newspaper *Haaretz* . He stated that “even if the whole world were willing to negotiate with the occupation, I would not sit at the same table with them” (Ma'a News Agency, January 16, 2005 ).

- The following are a few examples of the anarchy raging in the PA-administered territories:
  - **Gunfire near the homes and offices of senior PA officials** : A number of shots were fired near the home of Nasser Yussuf, Palestinian Interior Minister, in Ramallah (January 12). Several individuals were injured, possibly by shots fired by Yussuf's bodyguards. Shots were also fired near the office of Abu 'Alaa, apparently by Fatah operatives.
  - **Abduction of foreign nationals** : Foreign nationals are still being abducted in the Gaza Strip. An Italian citizen was abducted in Gaza City and released a short time later (Ramatan News Agency, January 1). In Rafah, attempted abductions of Japanese journalists (January 2) and American citizens (January 4) failed.
  - **An armed band of Fatah/Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades operatives confronted the National Palestinian Presidential Guard** in an attempt to take control of the Recruitment and Organization Office of Fatah in Gaza to protest the fact that their operatives were not on the list of Legislative Council candidates. In the confrontation one of the Fatah operatives was killed and three policemen were wounded (Al-Ayam, January 8).
- The Palestinian population still expects the PA to take effective security measures to return law and order to the PA-administered territories. Top PA officials, including Abu Mazen, have admitted that the signs of anarchy are the result of the PA's weakness. Chief of the Palestinian police, 'Alaa Hussein, admitted that dozens of policemen had joined the ranks of the various armed [i.e., terrorist] organizations to ensure their personal safety. Nasser Yussuf, Interior Minister, ordered the commanders of the security forces to court martial those of their subordinates who had been involved in incidents of anarchy. The Association of Attorneys in the Gaza Strip decided to strike for a number of days to protest the continuing attacks on the Palestinian legal system.