



Intelligence and Terrorism
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The Palestinian terrorist organizations, aware that the IDF will not deliberately attack civilians, have recently made more frequent use of civilians as human shields to protect their bases and operatives. Hamas and other terrorist organizations have publicly praised the tactic of using human shields and called for continuation.



Hamas operative Nizar Rayan announces the organization's intention to use "the bodies and souls" of [Palestinian] civilians to protect the houses of "jihad fighters" [i.e., terrorist-operatives] (Palestinian TV, November 19)



Civilians gathered on the roof of the house belonging to Wael Rajab al Sharqa, a Hamas operative (ANB TV, November 20)

Overview

1. **The Palestinian terrorist organizations operating in the Gaza Strip frequently use civilians as human shields.** They establish their military infrastructure within densely populated civilian areas, launch rockets at Israel from densely populated areas, open fire on IDF soldiers from areas inhabited by civilians and use civilian residential dwellings to hide the openings of the tunnels they dig to smuggle arms.

2. The organizations have recently initiated tactics intended to prevent, or at least hamper, IDF counterterrorist attacks on land and from the air by enlisting Palestinian civilians (including women and children). They send them to areas where fighting is being waged or an attack is about to be carried out and use them as human shields. Two prominent instances were the following:
 - A. On November 18, the **demolition** of the house of **Muhammad Barud** (a **Popular Resistance Committees** operative living in the Jabaliya refugee camp) was **prevented**. Hundreds of civilians, among them many children and adolescents, were called out to present themselves at his house on the assumption (which proved correct) that the IDF would not blow up the house if it held civilians. The mass turnout occurred after a telephone warning was issued by the IDF, telling the residents of the house to vacate it before the air strike.

 - B. **On November 3 (during Operation Autumn Clouds) dozens of terrorist-operatives using the Al-Nasr mosque in Beit Hanoun as a base were able to flee when hundreds of women marched to the scene as the media covered the event.** The terrorists had barricaded themselves in the mosque and were exchanging fire with IDF forces. About 200 women arrived (apparently sent by the terrorist organizations), mingled with the terrorists and helped them escape.

3. In both instances the terrorist organizations chalked up, in their view, impressive “successes” because of the IDF’s unwillingness to harm civilians. In the Jabaliya refugee camp the Israeli Air Force did not attack the terrorist-operative’s house

because of the civilian presence. At the mosque the soldiers would not fire indiscriminately at women and the terrorists could escape unharmed. The “success” of the two incidents encouraged the terrorist organizations, and they intend to use the tactic in future operations. **Both during and after the incident in Jabaliya, senior Hamas, Fatah and PRC operatives repeatedly called upon the Palestinian people to serve them as human shields.**

4. As far as the Palestinian terrorist organizations are concerned, using civilians (including women and children) as human shields improves their chances of standing up to IDF attacks, raises morale, increases the self-confidence of those who attack IDF forces and gives them greater freedom to carry out terrorist attacks against Israel.¹ Endangering civilian lives is a risk the terrorist organizations are willing to take because they know the IDF will not deliberately attack if there are civilians present. In addition, if civilians are accidentally harmed in an IDF attack, the blame automatically falls on Israel, and pictures of the dead civilians provide the terrorist organizations with propaganda that can be used advantageously with regard to various audiences: Palestinian, Arab, international and even Israeli.

5. With regard to international law, the use of civilians as human shields is a war crime and a gross violation of the international laws governing warfare. That is because it violates the basic principle of distinction between combatants and non-combatants, which is one of the cornerstones of the laws of war.

¹ Senior Hamas operatives Nizar Rayan boasted in an interview that men and women “would protect the jihad and their own fighters.” He also stated that Sderot is a Palestinian town and that as its residents flee today, so will the residents of Ashqelon flee (Pal-media, a Hamas Website, November 20).

Appendix 1

Aborting an air strike on the house of a PRC terrorist-operative in the Jabaliya refugee camp

6. **Muhammad Fuad Ahmad Barud** is a senior operative of the PRC² who lives in the Jabaliya refugee camp. In the early evening of November 18 the IDF planned to strike his house from the air as part of its policy of attacking the terrorist targets where weapons are stored. To prevent harm from coming to innocent civilians, about half an hour before the attack the IDF, as in the past (See below), transmitted a telephone warning to the building's residents, telling them to evacuate.



Left: Palestinian civilians gathering in front of Muhammad Barud's house. Right: Civilians lighting a bonfire on the roof of the house (Palestinian TV, November 18).

7. In an attempt to prevent the destruction of the house, the PRC ordered the inhabitants not to evacuate and also sent other Palestinians to the location to create a human shield. Familiar with IDF policy and morality, they knew the IDF would not deliberately blow up a building with civilians inside.
8. Following the call, hundreds of Palestinian civilians did in fact arrive, many of them children and adolescents, and crowded around the building as a human

² A Palestinian terrorist organization with a long history of carrying out lethal attacks against Israel. During the past year the organization focused its activities on launching Qassam rockets into Israeli territory. Since the disengagement of August 2005, when Israeli unilaterally pulled out of the Gaza Strip, the PRC has been active in directing terrorist attacks from Judea and Samaria, transferring technical know-how to the West Bank and infiltrating explosives experts and suicide bombers. The PRC is supported by Hamas and often serves as its subcontractor for carrying out terrorist attacks.

shield protecting the operative's house. Some of them even went onto the roof and lit a bonfire to show the IDF that there were civilians present. Senior Palestinian terrorist-operatives mingled with the civilians and were interviewed by reporters. The IDF did not attack because it did not want to harm civilians.

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Terrorists claim to have prevented another attack³

9. On November 20 the Palestinian media falsely claimed that a similar incident had occurred in Beit Lahiya. They stated that the IDF sent a similar telephone warning to evacuate the house of Wael Rajab al-Shaqra, an Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades commander and a senior operative in Hamas's Operational Force in the northern Gaza Strip.



Hamas operative Wael Rajab a-Shaqra, around whose house civilians gathered to form a human shield (Al-Jazeera English TV, November 21).

10. Hundreds of Palestinians arrived on the scene, including children and adolescents, to serve as a human shield to protect the Hamas operative. Hamas terrorist-operative **Musheir al-Masri**, who also arrived, appealed to the emotions of the crowd by telling them that they had “signed a martyrs’ pact for the sake of Allah” and that they would “**continue defending their homes and**

³ The claim has not been confirmed.

honor and serve as a human shield until the enemy retreated” (Hamas’s Al-Aqsa TV, November 20; Firas Website, November 20).



Palestinians as a human shield in the street and on the roof of Wael Rajab al-Sharqa’s house in Beit Lahiya (ANB TV, November 20).

Intentions to make more use of living shields

11. The incident in the Jabaliya refugee camp set a precedent for the PRC and other Palestinian terrorist organizations. The spokesmen have stated that they fully intend to use the human shield tactic in the future to prevent Israeli attacks. For example:

- A. On November 19 Hamas prime minister **Ismail Haniya** visited PRC operative Muhammad Barud and was warmly received by the civilians who were there as human shields. He was quoted by a radio commentator as saying, “I am certain that what happened [here] tonight will happen again...It is a good example for the Palestinian people and sends the message that aggression will not break our will...(Radio Sawt Al-Quds, November 19).
- B. **Sheik Nizar Rayan**, who took part in “defending” Muhammad Barud’s house, announced the beginning of a campaign to “defend jihad fighters’ houses.” He said that “**from today on [jihad fighters] will not allow**

Israel to attack their houses...” In a different interview he said that men and women had gone to Muhammad Barud’s house and were divided into daytime and nighttime shifts (Palestinian TV, November 19; Hamas’s Pal-media Website, November 19 and 20).



Nizar Rayan: “Palestinians will defend terrorist-operatives with their bodies and souls. From now on we will be not permit Israel to attack any house belonging to a jihad fighter” (Palestinian TV, November 19).

C. **Salah Abu Warda**, a senior Fatah operative, said that “when Fatah activists heard that a civilian’s house [i.e., the house of terrorist-operative Muhammad Barud] was about to be attacked, **they rushed there to defend the building with their bodies**. In the same way, they will provide a human shield [in the future as well] for buildings [used by] jihad fighters,” along with the other organizations (Palestinian TV, November 19).

D. **Abu Mujahad**, a PRC spokesman, said that following the incident “no more houses will be blown up.” He called upon all Palestinians to **do their duty and serve as human shields** for the buildings used by the various organizations, stating that “it is the correct path” (Palestinian TV, November 19).

E. The PRC Website posted an article entitled “A valuable precedent: throngs defend the houses of jihad fighters from bombs.” It stated, among other things, that “In an unprecedented act... on the roof of the house of the operational commander of the Al-Nasser Salah al-Din Battalion, which the forces of the occupation threatened to blow up, an operation was started

[called] ‘protecting the houses of jihad fighters’” (Moqawama Website, November 21).

Appendix 2

Palestinian women “rescue” terrorist-operatives who attacked from inside Beit Hanoun’s Al-Nasr mosque during Operation Autumn Clouds



Left: Palestinian women confronting IDF soldiers (Hamas’s Palestine-info Website, November 13). Right: Al-Nasr mosque, damaged in the incident (Ma’an News Agency, November 10).

12. During Operation Autumn Clouds the IDF was forced to deal with the Palestinian terrorist organizations’ using civilians as human shields. A prominent example occurred on November 3, when several dozen terrorist-operatives barricaded themselves in Al-Nasr mosque, which has particular religious and historic importance for the residents of Beit Hanoun. IDF forces surrounded the mosque and neighboring buildings and called to the terrorists inside to lay down their weapons and surrender. The terrorists opened fire and refused to capitulate.⁴

13. The terrorists in the mosque were “rescued” by a procession, well-covered by the media, of about 200 Palestinian women, veiled and wearing traditional Muslim dress, who were apparently sent there by the terrorist organizations and mosque preachers. The terrorists mingled with the women and some of them even donned female clothing. During the “rescue operation” two women were

⁴ According to international law religious institutions are protected places. The cynical use to which the mosque was put by the terrorists is considered a war crime and gross violation of the international rules governing combat, and might turn the location into a legitimate military target.

killed by IDF fire and about 10 were wounded. **The IDF does not fire at women indiscriminately, and that enabled the terrorists to escape.**

14. The Palestinian media, especially those belonging to Hamas, praised the “rescue.” The women were described as overcoming the IDF and as fighting “shoulder-to-shoulder” with the male terrorists. The Hamas media claimed that the action was part of a plan to extricate the fighters from the mosque and even compared the Palestinian women with the female suicide bombers in Chechnya.