



Center for Special Studies
Intelligence and Terrorism
Information Center

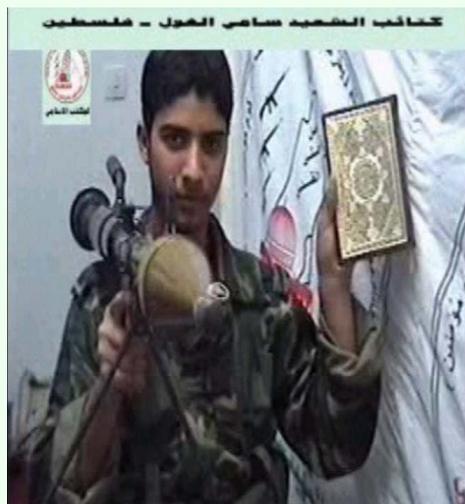
News of the Israeli-Palestinian Confrontation December 1-14, 2006

Hamas enlists support and raises money ...



Ismail Haniya and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad shaking hands during Haniya's visit to Iran (IRNA, December 10)

...and terrorism from the Gaza Strip continues, although its scope decreased.



A Sami al-Ghoul Brigades (Fatah) operative who tried to carry out a terrorist attack near Kibbutz Nahal Oz, photographed beforehand (Ramattan News Agency, December 14)

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Overview

- **The Palestinian terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip continue to violate the ceasefire by sporadically firing Qassam rockets at population centers in the western Negev.** However, the scope of rocket fire from the Strip has decreased, and there has been a sharp decrease in other forms of terrorist activity. Responsibility for most of the continued rocket fire from the Gaza Strip and the attempted terrorist attack was claimed by various Fatah factions.
- Negotiations for the establishment of a Palestinian national unity government have stalled, leading to increased anarchy in the Palestinian Authority-administered territories, especially the Gaza Strip. That was manifested by the mutual assassinations (which also injured children and innocent bystanders), violent clashes between Fatah (and the Palestinian security forces) and Hamas operatives, and the Hamas takeover of the Rafah crossing, which came in the wake of Ismail Haniya's being prevented from entering the Gaza Strip with the tens of millions of dollars in cash he collected during his recent tour of the Arab states. In the end he did enter, but without the money, and on his way from the crossing, an attempt was made on his life.
- The most important events of the tour were his visits to Syria and Iran, where he placed himself firmly in the Syrian-Iranian camp ("the axis of evil"). He again asserted that Hamas would never recognize the right of the State of Israel to exist and that the terrorist campaign would continue until Israel was destroyed. The Iranians promised him \$250 million to ease the pressures currently exerted on the Hamas government (and to increase their influence in the PA-administered territories).

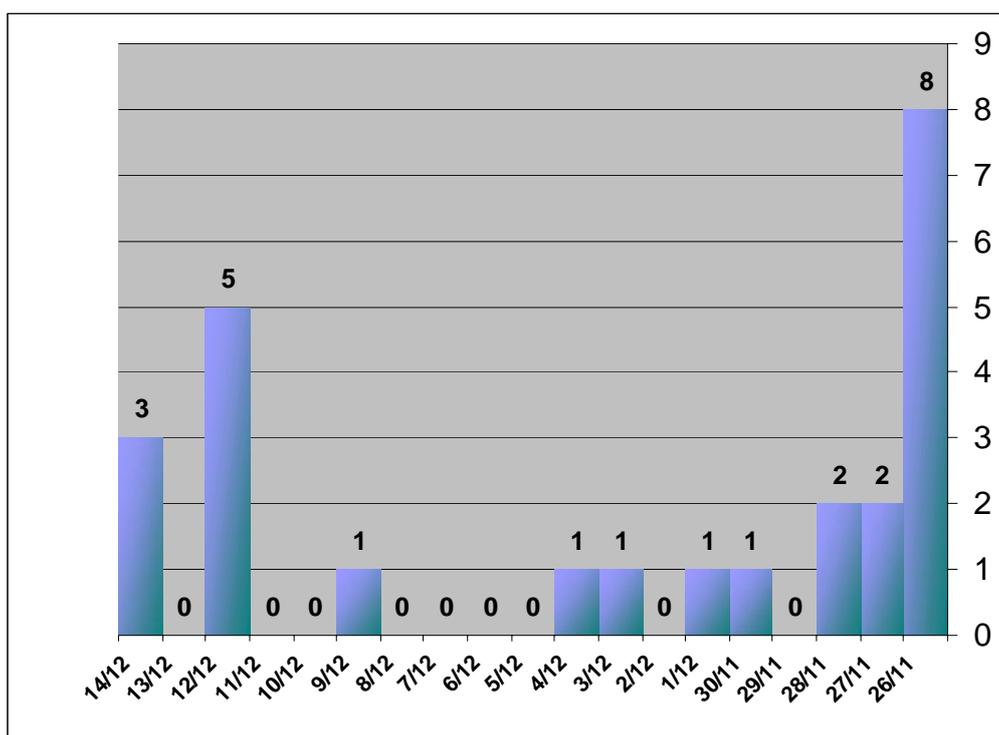
The Palestinian terrorist organizations (mainly Fatah) continue violating the ceasefire

■ Despite the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip which went into effect on November 26, sporadic Qassam rocket fire at population centers in the western Negev continues, although with far less intensity than previously. **Between November 26 and December 14, twenty-four Qassam rockets were fired, as opposed to 144 between November 1 and 26** (the most active month with regard to rocket fire). The IDF, continuing to practice restraint, has not responded.

■ Most of the responsibility for the rocket fire was claimed by **Fatah**, whose factions in the Strip publicly dissociated themselves from the agreement. The most prominent violation was the launching of five rockets on December 12, for which Fatah and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility, its first time for the PIJ since the ceasefire went into effect.

■ Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said that Israel's restraint in the face of Qassam rocket fire "was becoming more difficult" and that he was aware how easy it was for the situation to deteriorate into violence (Ynet, November 13).

Daily rocket fire since the ceasefire went into effect



Israeli counterterrorist activities in the Gaza Strip

■ On December 13 an IDF force shot and killed an armed Palestinian terrorist north of the Karni crossing. According to the Ramattan News Agency, he apparently belonged to the Sami al-Ghul Brigades, a Fatah faction, and intended to carry out an terrorist attack near Kibbutz Nahal Oz in the western Negev.

■ Egyptian forces deployed along the border uncovered three tunnels near the Philadelphi route (December 6 and 13).

Judea and Samaria

Security guard critically wounded in stabbing

■ On December 13, a civilian security guard was stabbed and critically wounded near the Qalandia roadblock (north of Jerusalem). The attack occurred when several Palestinians crowded around the vehicle crossing point. Taking cover in the crowd, one of the Palestinians approached the guard and stabbed him in the neck. Three Palestinians fled the scene, one of whom was apprehended by Israeli security forces. During recent months a number of knife-carrying Palestinians were detained at the Qalandia and other roadblocks in Judea and Samaria.

IDF forces shot at in Qabatia

■ On December 11 near Qabatia (south of Jenin) an IDF force which came to rescue a vehicle was shot at. An IDF soldier was shot in the head but is not in critical condition. The Popular Resistance Committees claimed responsibility for the attack.

Terrorist attack within Israel foiled

■ On December 13 an IDF force stopped a car at the Ein Bidan roadblock (east of Nablus). An explosive device weighing 8 kilograms (17.6 lb) was found hidden in a carryall in the trunk. The four passengers, all of them Fatah operatives, were detained.

Fatah/Tanzim operatives in Tulkarm and Bethlehem detained

■ As part of their antiterrorist activities, the Israeli security forces carried out a series of detentions throughout Judea and Samaria. Prominent among the detainees were two senior Fatah/Tanzim terrorist-operatives who had been on the wanted list for a long time:

✿ On December 4 a terrorist-operative who headed a group which dealt with planning suicide bombing attacks in Israel was detained. Ten days previously a

potential suicide bomber was detained; he was to have been dispatched by the aforementioned terrorist-operative to carry out an attack.

✿ On December 10 a long-wanted Fatah/Tanzim operative was detained. He had been involved in the planning and carrying out of several terrorist attacks in the Bethlehem district, among them a shooting attack in November 2000, in which two IDF soldiers were killed and four wounded.

✿ On December 14, the head of the Fatah/Tanzim in the refugee camp of Beit Al-Masri (near Nablus) was killed. The terrorist had been involved in the planning and carrying out of terrorist attacks in the Nablus area and within Israel, and in directing and funding operatives in the Gaza Strip.

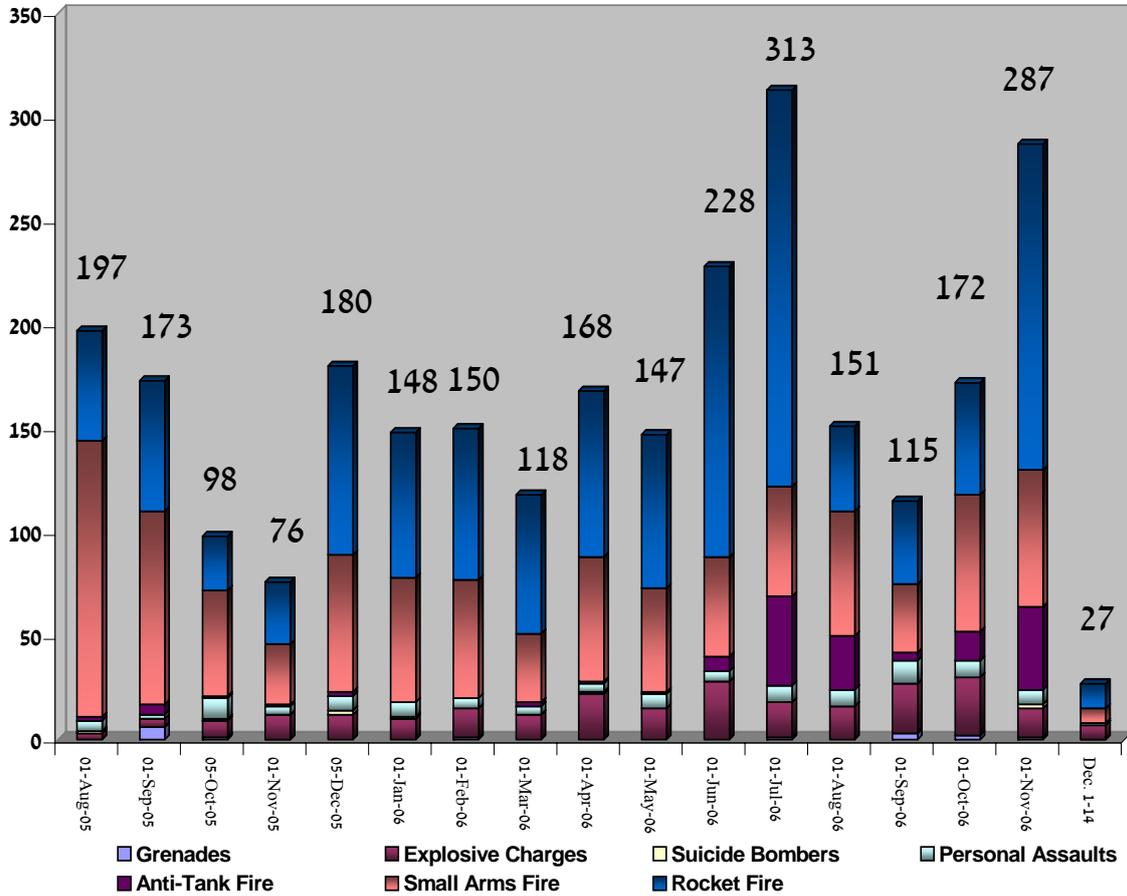
Exposure of a PIJ operative infrastructure south of Mt. Hebron

■ In recent months the Israel Security Agency exposed a broad infrastructure of PIJ terrorist-operatives near Dura (south of Mt. Hebron). It consisted of a number of terrorist squads which planned to carry out lethal terrorist attacks. So far fifty operatives have been detained in Dura and neighboring villages. Among them are seven operatives who expressed willingness to carry out suicide bombing attacks within Israeli territory.¹

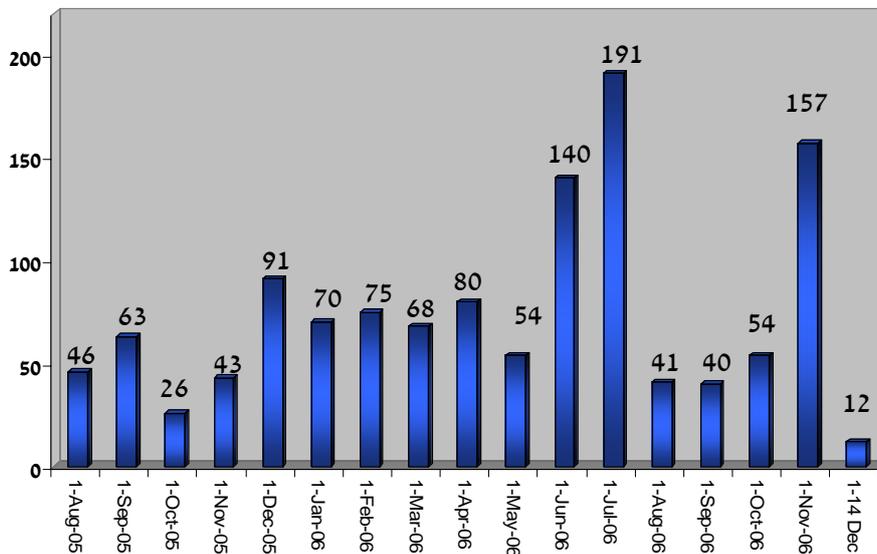
¹ A Bulletin on the subject is on the Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center Website in Hebrew and will shortly be available in English.

Statistical Data

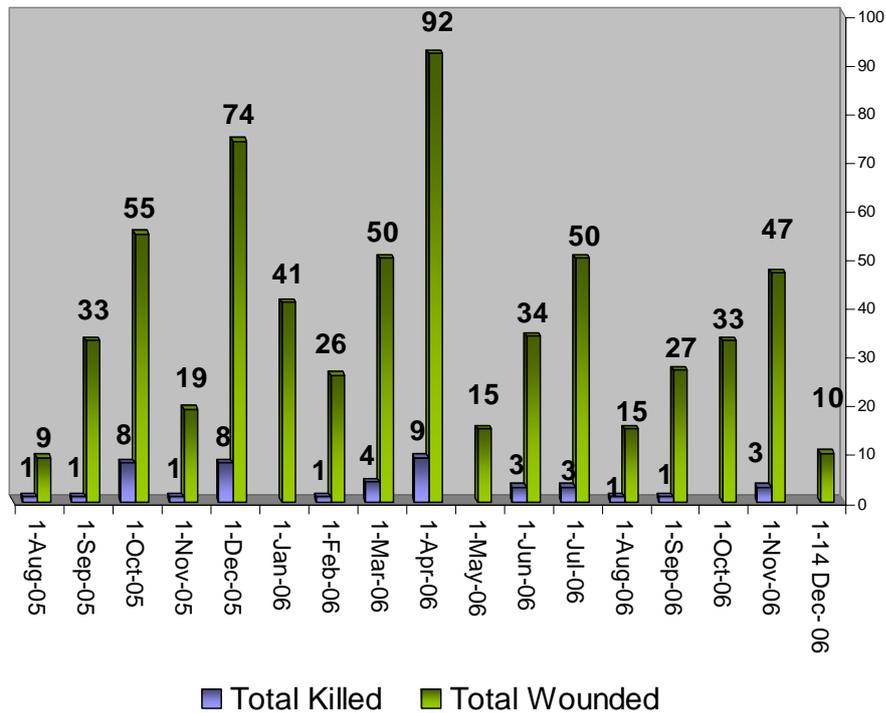
Monthly distribution of attacks



Monthly distribution of identified (mostly Qassam) rocket hits



Monthly distribution of Israeli casualties



Israeli Supreme Court decision approves targeted killings on an individual basis (first report)

■ On December 14 the Supreme Court judges, headed by retired Supreme Court president Aharon Barak rejected an appeal for an across-the-board ban on the targeted killings Israel uses to defend itself from terrorist-operatives. According to the ruling, not every targeted killing could be banned in advance but limitations had to be placed on them.²

² The ruling in full can be found in Hebrew on the Israeli Supreme Court Website, translated into English at http://elyon1.court.gov.il/Files_ENG/02/690/007/a34/02007690.a34.pdf.

The Internal Palestinian Arena

Hamas prime minister Ismail Haniya tours the Arab states



Ismail Haniya leaving the plane in Syria (Syrian TV, December 5)

■ During the first half of December Hamas prime minister Ismail Haniya visited the Arab states. He began in Egypt and went to Qatar on December 3, visited Syria between December 3 and 7, Iran between December 7 and 11 and from there went to Sudan. He cut his Sudan visit short because of the growing anarchy in the Gaza Strip.

■ During his visits in Damascus and Teheran he met with senior members of the local governments. In Syria he met with both the president, Bashar Assad, and his second in command, Farouk Al-Sharaa. In Iran he met with Iranian leader Ali Khamenei and president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Both the visits and the official statements he made conformed to Syrian and Iranian policy, and sent a clear message that Hamas had cast it lot with the Iranian-Syrian axis (“the axis of evil”), from which it expected to receive financial, military and political aid. After his visit to Teheran Haniya reported that the Iranians had promised a total of \$250 million in aid (See below).

■ During his meetings in Damascus and Teheran Ismail Haniya repeatedly rejected the right of the State of Israel (“the oppressive Zionist entity”) to exist and noted that the Hamas government “...will never recognize the Zionist entity.” He praised the path of terrorism (“resistance”) and said that terrorist attacks against Israel would continue. He also said that **he viewed Iran as the Palestinians’ strategic depth.** Regarding the

internal Palestinian arena, he called for the establishment of a Palestinian national unity government to “foil the American-Zionist plot,” but noted that such a government had to be based on Hamas ideology.³

■ When Ismail Haniya returned to the Gaza Strip, Israeli defense minister Amir Peretz requested that the Rafah crossing be closed to prevent Haniya from entering with tens of millions of dollars in cash collected in the countries he had visited. Near the crossing Abu Mazen’s presidential guard exchanged fire with Hamas operatives who tried to use force to break through the crossing. According to first reports, Hamas operatives gained control of the crossing and destroyed much of it. As a result, the European observers announced that it would be closed. As far as is known, the Egyptian authorities confiscated the money Haniya was carrying, allowing him to enter the Gaza Strip. After he entered the Gaza Strip, he was shot at. His son was wounded and one of his bodyguards was killed.

Worsening anarchy in the PA-administered territories

■ The anarchy in the PA-administered territories, especially the Gaza Strip, reached new heights. Violent demonstrations and confrontations continue between the various factions and services, accompanied by exchanges of Hamas-Fatah accusations of responsibility for the worsening crisis.

■ Events which occurred were:

■ **Violent protest demonstrations held by members of the security services subordinate to Abu Mazen who still have not received their salaries:**

³ For further information see our December 12 Bulletin entitled “Hamas prime minister Ismail Haniya firmly positioned himself in the Iranian-Syrian axis during visits to Damascus and Teheran,” at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/html/ismail_haniya.htm and http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/ismail_haniya_e.pdf.

- About 500 members of the security services in Gaza and Rafah broke into the Palestinian Legislative Council building in Gaza (Al-Jazeera TV, December 9). Hamas condemned the event and represented it as an attempt to overthrow the legitimate Palestinian rule (Hamas Website, December 9).



Members of the security services demonstrating in front of the Palestinian Legislative Council building in Gaza (Al-Jazeera TV, December 9)

- Two members of the Palestinian security service were injured by Hamas operatives in the incidents in front of the Palestinian Legislative Council building during the mass demonstration. The demonstrators were protesting not having received their salaries and claimed that Hamas was using the money it collected to pay only the salaries of its own men. There were similar demonstrations in the West Bank.

❁ **Mutual killings:**

- On December 10 the cavalcade in which Hamas interior minister Sa'id Siyam was riding in Gaza City was attacked. Sa'id Siyam is a target for anti-Hamas elements because of the power he has accumulated and as the individual responsible for Hamas's disputed operational force.
- On December 11 three young sons of Bahaa Ba'lousha, a colonel in the Palestinian General Intelligence service in the Gaza Strip, and his driver were killed in a shooting attack on his vehicle. The finger of guilt was pointed in Hamas's direction. The killing of the three children shocked the Palestinian population and led to a wave of sharp condemnation and demonstrations.



Left: The Bahaa Balousha's bullet-riddled car (Al-Jazeera TV, December 11). Right: A demonstration in front of Abu Mazen's house to protest the killing of the three children (Palestinian TV, December 13)

- On December 13 Bassam Abd al-Malik, a senior Hamas operative, lecturer at Al-Quds University and a judge at the Gaza Strip Sharia' court was shot by gunmen in Khan Yunis.
- As a result of the increase in violent incidents, the Hamas government decided to make the security services of the interior ministry directly responsible to the interior minister. It also decided to make 2,5000 members of the operational force directly responsible the interior ministry as ordinary employees and to allot \$300,000 to build them bases. In response, a source in the office of the PA chairman announced that the decision was illegal because only Abu Mazen had the authority to make such decisions (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, December 5).

Early presidential and Palestinian Legislative Council elections

- The PLO executive committee met in Ramallah for an extraordinary session on December 2, and recommended that Abu Mazen hold early presidential and Palestinian Legislative Council elections. At the end of the session an announcement was issued calling upon prime minister Ismail Haniya to resign before the dialog about forming the government began.
- Hamas spokesman Ismail Radwan was severely critical of the decisions and called them "a revolt against the government" (Hamas Website, December 2). Hamas spokesmen stated that they had no intention of holding Palestinian Legislative Council

elections, a step whose legality was doubtful. **Note: In a speech given on December 16, Abu Mazen called for early elections, without mentioning a specific date.** Before and after the speech, violent clashes broke out between Fatah and Hamas, especially in the Gaza Strip and Ramallah, wounding dozens of people.



Establishing a national unity government: the Palestinian tangle (Al-Ayyam, November 25)

Palestinian Authority economics

- **The economic crisis in the PA continues** despite the boasts made by senior Hamas members of the Palestinian government's ability to lift the international siege and repel the pressures exerted on the Hamas government. Delays in paying PA employee salaries continue, especially for the security forces loyal to Fatah and Abu Mazen.
- The Hamas government recently received promises of funding from several sources:
 - ✿ **Europe** – the European Union announced that it would use a temporary international support system to pay the salaries of more than 70,000 low-income workers in the public sector. The amount stated was 20 million euros (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, December 5).

✿ **Iran** – Haniya was promised \$250 million in Iranian aid to pay the salaries of employees of the ministries of welfare, labor and culture for six months (\$100 million), allotments for the families of prisoners and shaheeds (\$45 million), and for fishermen and the unemployed.

✿ **Qatar, Sudan and Syria** – The three countries also promised sums of tens of millions of dollars. Highest was Qatar, which promised \$22 million to pay the salaries of the employees of the health and education ministries and for a series of projects.

■ A finance ministry delegation is supposed to leave for the countries visited by Haniya to arrange the transfer of the promised funds (Al-Jazeera TV, December 13).

Anti-Israeli and anti-American incitement through cartoons in the Palestinian media

■ In all the Palestinian media, including Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, the official PA newspaper, the vicious anti-Israeli anti-American campaign continues. One of its aspects is a series of particularly virulent political cartoons.

■ Most prominent are those drawn by Hamas-affiliated and -supporting Omayya Joha.⁴ Her cartoons appear in the PA's newspaper and Hamas media, and are anti-Israeli, anti-Semitic and anti-American, and are very popular among Palestinians and in the Arab world in general.

■ The following are some examples of cartoons found in the PA newspaper and Hamas media.

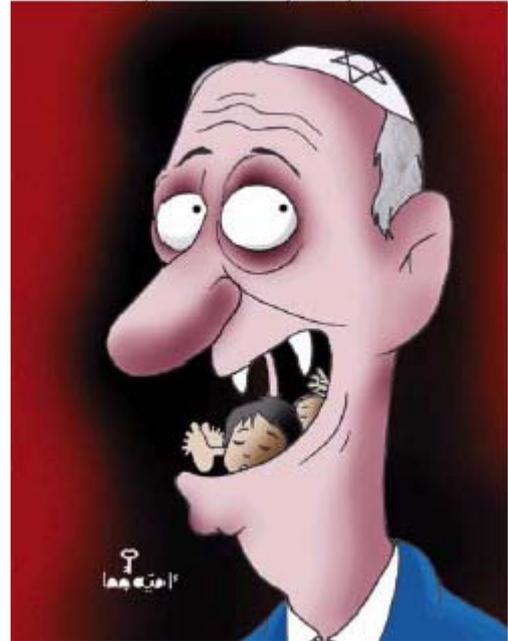
⁴ Her husband was a Hamas terrorist-operative who was killed in a gun battle with IDF soldiers in 2003.

Israel

2002...



2006...



In 2002 Ariel Sharon was pictured by Omayya Joha eating Palestinian children. She recycled the theme in 2006 to depict Ehud Olmert. (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, November 9)



Another Omayya Joha version of the same theme: President Bush and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert eat Palestinians served to them by an Arab. (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, November 8)

The United States



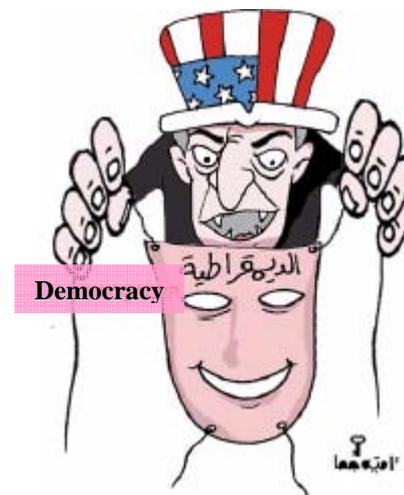
An image contributed to a Hamas Website by a surfer. It shows a crucified Palestinian child, a way of protesting the American veto of a proposed condemnation of Israel.



A cartoon by Omayya Joha: The United States as the Great Satan with a bloody knife in one hand and a Palestinian child in the other (Al-Rissala, November 16)



A cartoon by Omayya Joha: The United States controlled by the Jews (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, December 7)



A cartoon by Omayya Joha: The true face – with a Jewish nose – behind the smiling mask of American democracy (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, November 19)