



**Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center
at the Israel Intelligence Heritage
& Commemoration Center (IICC)**

January 20, 2008

Operation Cast Lead-Update No. 18¹



A Hamas "victory production:" Palestinians demonstrate support for Hamas on the ruins of the house of senior terrorist operative Nizar Rayyan, killed by the Israeli Air Force in Jabaliya (Photo: Jerry Lampen for Reuters, January 20, 2009).

¹ This is the last of the daily updates which have appeared since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead. Updates will now appear in their weekly form (every Tuesday in the Hebrew version) and Information Bulletins will appear according to events and circumstances. We will continue issuing Bulletins illustrating the use the terrorist organizations make of civilians as human shields based on the large amount of information received during the fighting.

Overview

■ On January 19, for the first time since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead, the south of Israel was quiet, both on the fighting front in the Gaza Strip and in the cities, towns and villages around it. IDF forces continue holding commanding positions, especially in rocket launching zones, after having redeployed at the end of the fighting. On the afternoon of January 20 the calm was broken by two shooting events in which IDF forces were attacked. (**Note:** On the morning of January 21, the last IDF soldier left the Gaza Strip).

■ Life in the Gaza Strip has begun to return to normal. In view of the extent of the destruction and losses, Hamas has made an effort to produce a "victory" narrative, issuing fabricated statements about IDF losses and "events" during the fighting which never took place. In the south of Israel, in the cities, towns and villages within rocket range of the Gaza Strip, life has also begun to return to normal. Almost all the children in kindergartens and schools have gone back to their studies, and commerce has resumed.

The situation on the ground

■ On **January 19** no events were recorded in the Gaza Strip. Most of the IDF forces continue to withdraw (the withdrawal was completed on January 21). The remaining forces have been redeployed in positions commanding the zones from which rockets were fired into Israeli territory. The Israeli Air Force has abstained from attacking for the first time since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead (on January 18 Israeli aircraft attacked rocket launchers from which rockets were fired after the ceasefire).

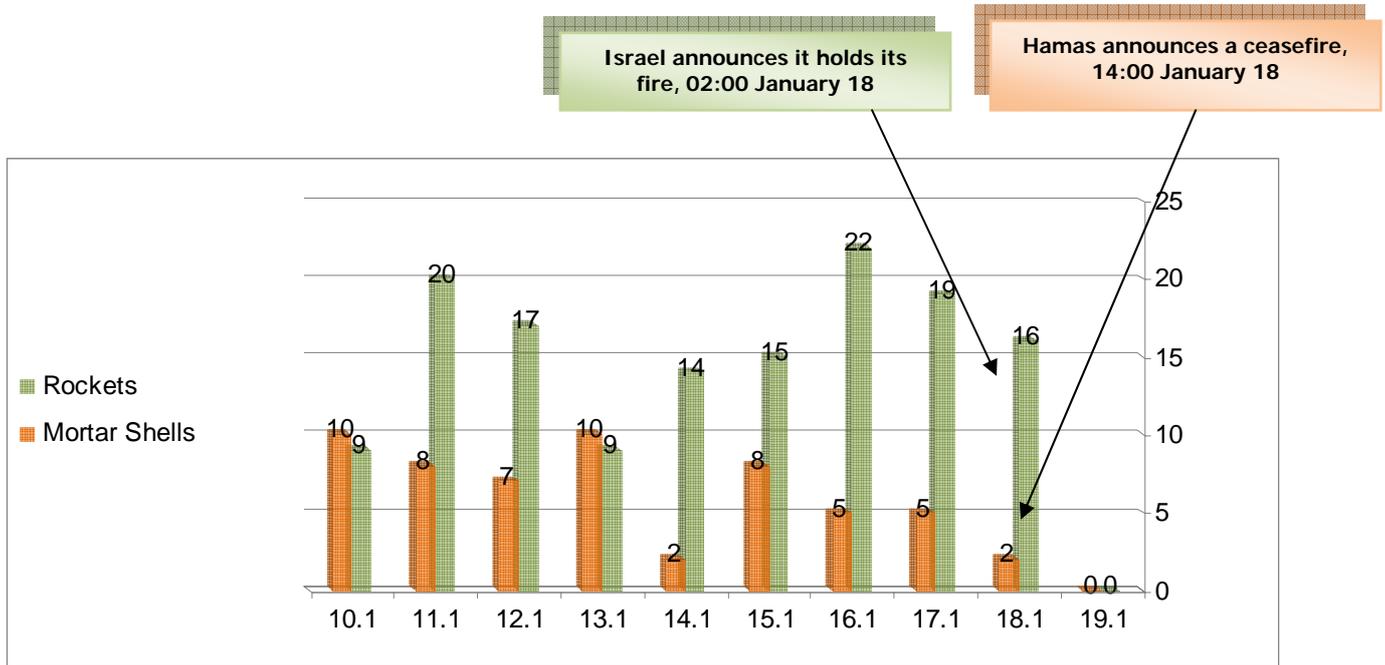
■ On **January 20** (as of 1500 hours), the ceasefire was violated when terrorists opened fire on an IDF force near the border security fence south of the Kissufim crossing. Forty minutes later, armed Palestinians shot at an IDF force in the central Gaza Strip. The force returned fire. In both instances there were no casualties (Ynet, January 20).

Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire into Israeli Territory

■ During January 19 there was neither rocket nor mortar shell fire into Israel, making it possible for the residents of the south to gradually return to their routine lives. The schools began teaching again and factories and businesses returned to normal operation.

During Operation Cast Lead (December 27, 2008 to January 18, 2009), **571 rockets and 205 mortar shells** landed in Israeli territory. The fire killed **four** people (three civilians and one soldier), wounded **16** seriously to critically, and **351** sustained minor injuries. In addition, several hundred were treated for shock.

Rockets and Mortar Shells Fired at Israel Since Israel Began Holding its Fire



Judea and Samaria

■ In Judea and Samaria there was an increase in various types of terrorist attacks on January 19. The main incidents were the following:

- **A shooting attack was carried out in the Benjamin district:** An Israeli civilian was critically wounded after having been shot in the upper part of his body in a drive-by shooting near the settlement of Kochav Hashahar, east of Ramallah. His wife was not harmed and the two managed to reach the settlement. A helicopter evacuated the wounded man to a hospital and IDF forces searched the area for the terrorists.
- **A Molotov cocktail** was thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Bethlehem. There were no casualties and no damage was done to the car. IDF forces searched the area and detained two Palestinians who had been involved in throwing Molotov cocktails in the past.
- **Stones** were thrown at an Israeli bus near the Hawara checkpoint south of Nablus. There were no casualties and no damage was done to the bus.

Humanitarian Aid Delivered to the Gaza Strip

Israel

■ On January 19, the delivery of humanitarian aid continued through the crossings from Israel into the Gaza Strip:

- 195 trucks carrying 5,000 tons of aid from international agencies and donations from Jordan and Egypt were delivered through the Kerem Shalom and Karni crossings. A road was paved at the Kerem Shalom crossing making it possible to deliver goods directly from Egypt into the Gaza Strip. On January 19, ten trucks passed through with 200 tons of flour.
- About 540,000 liters of diesel fuel and 200 tons of cooking gas were delivered through the Nahal Oz fuel terminal.
- Ten ambulances from Judea and Samaria went into the Gaza Strip in coordination with the Red Cross.
- 33 Palestinians left the Gaza Strip through the Erez crossing for medical treatment in Israel.

■ Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead, approximately 1,700 trucks carrying 42,000 tons of humanitarian aid crossed into the Gaza Strip. In addition, more than 2,200,000 liters of fuel were delivered through the Nahal Oz fuel terminal and the Kerem Shalom crossing.

The Rafah crossing

■ On January 19, 75 wounded Palestinians went through the Rafah crossing to receive medical treatment in Egypt. In addition, dozens of doctors, media correspondents and pro-Palestinian activists entered the Gaza Strip. Humanitarian aid continues to be delivered from Egypt through the Rafah crossing. Since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead, more than 4,500 units of blood have been delivered. On January 19, 2,500 more units of blood were supposed to have been delivered (Al-Yawm Al-Sabaa, January 19, 2009).



Syrian trucks bringing humanitarian aid on their way to the Gaza Strip (Syrian TV, January 20, 2009).

■ **Hamas continues to confiscate the humanitarian aid entering the Gaza Strip.**

Hamas also prevents wounded Palestinians from reaching the Erez crossing for medical treatment in the field hospital set up there by Israel, and instead sends them through the Rafah crossing for treatment in Egypt.

The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip

■ The return to normal continues in the Gaza Strip. Families which fled from battle zones are returning to their houses, traffic on the roads has increased, and businesses are reopening. UNRWA reported that 50,000 Gazans are still sheltered in its facilities because their houses were damaged during the fighting. Gazans appealed to the Hamas police to deal with the situation, complaining that damaged houses were being looted (Al-Aqsa Radio, January 19). In addition, two children were reported killed on January 19 when they played with a mine laid by Hamas operatives to booby-trap a building.

■ According to reports from the Palestinian central statistics bureau, during the fighting 22,000 buildings were damaged, 4,100 of them completely destroyed. The bureau estimated the damage done to the Gaza Strip at \$1.9 billion. Muhammad Hasouna, minister of national economy in the Gaza Strip, estimated the damage at \$3 billion dollars.

Fatah activists oppressed by Hamas

■ During and after the fighting, Hamas imposed its authority on the residents of the Gaza Strip while oppressing Fatah activists. On January 19, an increase was reported in the number of Fatah activists shot by Hamas operatives, especially those shot in the legs. Since the ceasefire went into effect, several dozen Fatah activists have been wounded. It was also reported that Fatah activists were abducted by Hamas and are being held captive in improvised jails.

Hamas produces the narrative of its “victory”

■ Following Ismail Haniya’s declaration of “victory,” Abu Obedia, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades spokesman, delivered his own “victory speech,” trying to paint the false picture that Hamas “won” the war. He made the completely untrue claim that 80 Israel soldiers had been killed, 49 of them in direct combat with Hamas operatives (**Note:** Ten Israeli soldiers were killed, four of them by friendly fire and one by a mortar shell. In addition, three civilians were killed by rocket fire). He also boasted of fictitious military achievements, such as the downing of helicopters, the abduction of IDF soldiers and attacks within Israel² (Al-Aqsa TV, January 19, 2009).



Left: Thousands of Gazans march to express their joy at the “victory of the resistance” (Al-Aqsa TV, January 20, 2009). Right: A huge flame V for “victory” (Hamas’s PALDF Forum, January 19, 2009).

Egypt

■ Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak delivered a speech at the opening of the Kuwait economic summit in which he said that the fighting in the Gaza Strip had exposed many of the problems existing in the Arab world, especially its factionalism. He said that Egypt respected the “Palestinian resistance” [i.e., terrorist organizations], but that it should have shown responsibility for its people when it decided to go to war. He added that Egypt would make every effort to bring about an Israeli withdrawal, ensure the opening of the crossings and bring about an internal Palestinian reconciliation (Al-Jazeera TV, January 19, 2009).

² Hamas’s efforts to produce a “victory story” will be analyzed in a separate Bulletin which will appear shortly.



The Kuwait summit meeting (Al-Jazeera TV, January 19, 2009).

The Palestinian Authority and the terrorist organizations

- **Mahmoud Abbas** delivered a speech at the Kuwait summit in which he abstained from criticizing Hamas, but rather said he supported the Egyptian initiative as the only solution for the problems of the so-called siege and the opening of the crossings. However, he did criticize the radical policies which encouraged the Gazans to fight. He called on all the Palestinian organizations to rise about their internal conflicts and coordinate their positions for a joint meeting in Egypt (Wafa News Agency, January 19, 2009).

- **Salam Fayyad**, prime minister of the Palestinian Authority, said that he was afraid the mechanism for delivering international aid for the rehabilitation of the Gaza Strip would widen the political rift between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas. He said a distinction had to be made between aid for humanitarian needs (which, by implication, would be delivered directly to the Gaza Strip) and support for rehabilitating the Gaza Strip, which had to be in the hands of the Palestinian Authority (Reuters, January 18, 2009).

- Meeting with the media, Salam Fayyad described the operation in the Gaza Strip as “an unprecedented shedding of blood.” He said that Israel had broken international law and all the international humanitarian conventions. He also called for the Egyptian initiative to be acted on and for a national unity government to be established as a foundation for resolving the internal Palestinian conflict. He said that such a government, composed of 25 authorized Palestinian representatives, would be able to renew unity (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, January 19, 2009).

Iran

- Ali Moutahari, delegate to the Iranian parliament, claimed that as a result of “negative Zionist propaganda,” the Muslim countries abstained from sending aid to Hamas. In his opinion, that was the reason Iran should openly send Hamas military aid, and even publicly

say "We must not work secretly to send arms to the legal Hamas government." He also called for protests and for diplomatic steps to be taken against the Islamic countries (Asr website, Iran, January 19, 2009).