



Intelligence and Terrorism  
Information Center

## News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

October 12-20, 2009



The Goldstone Report represented as an obstacle to Palestinian reconciliation (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, October 17, 2009).

### Overview

- This week a small number of rockets were fired into Israel from the Gaza Strip. Hamas continues its policy of restraint and the Palestinian media again reported that its security forces took action against the rocket launching squads.
- **The UN Human Rights Council in Geneva** adopted the Goldstone Report and its recommendations. The decision, which does not condemn Hamas, asks the UN General Assembly to deliberate the report and update the Security Council about the steps taken by Israel to implement the Report's recommendations. **Hamas** was quick to adopt the decision, claiming that the Report "exonerated" it from responsibility for rocket fire and the use of civilians as human shields. It also said it was ready to appoint an "investigatory committee," as required by the Report. The **Palestinian Authority** said it would promote the implementation of the Report in international legal forums. **Iran and Hezbollah** rushed to celebrate the event, which serves Iran's policy of delegitimizing Israel and its right to exist.

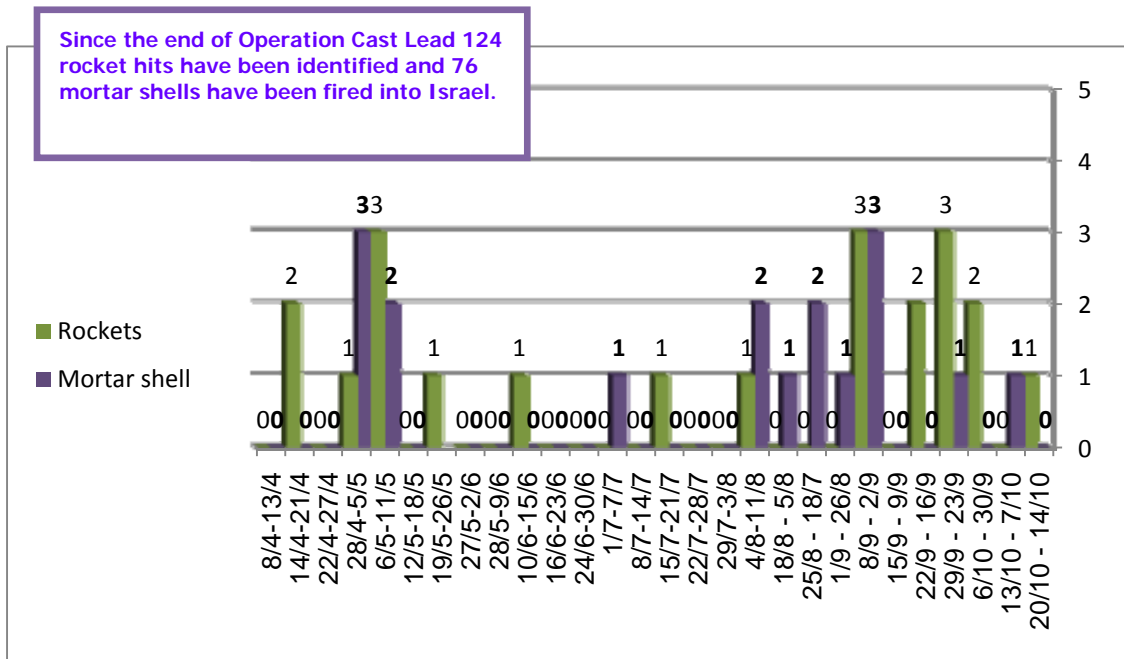
## Important Events

### The Gaza Strip

#### Rocket and mortar shell fire

■ During the past week **two rocket hits were identified** in open areas near Israeli villages in the western Negev (October 13 and 18). There were no casualties and no damage was done. Fatah's Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades claimed responsibility for the October 18 attack, saying it had launched an improved so-called "Arafat 2" rocket (Fatah Internet forum, October 18, 2009). A network affiliated with the **global jihad** also claimed responsibility for the attack (Global jihad Internet forum, October 18, 2009).

#### Rocket and mortar shell fired into Israeli territory<sup>1</sup>



#### Israeli Air Force activity

■ On October 14 in response to the rocket fire the Israeli Air Force struck **tunnels in the Rafah region** used to smuggle weapons into the Gaza Strip. According to reports in the Palestinian media, two tunnels located behind a school near the Rafah crossing were hit, killing one Palestinian and seriously wounding six (PalPress website, Qudsnet website, October 14, 2009).

#### Hamas continues foiling attempts to launch rockets

■ The security forces of the Hamas de-facto administration continue their operations against rocket launching squads in the Gaza Strip. On October 14 Hamas internal security forces reportedly

<sup>1</sup> The statistics do not include the mortar shells fired at IDF soldiers patrolling the border fence which fell inside the Gaza Strip.

surrounded terrorist operatives trying to launch a rocket in the region of Dir al-Balah (central Gaza Strip) (Fatah forum website, October 15, 2009).

## Judea and Samaria

### Counterterrorism activities

■ The Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities this past week, detaining Palestinians suspected of terrorist activity. Terrorist incidents occurred on a daily basis, particularly stones and Molotov cocktails thrown at Israeli vehicles. Two Israeli civilians were injured. Among the incidents were the following:

● **October 19:** Stones were thrown at an Israeli vehicle southwest of Ramallah. There were no casualties but the vehicle was damaged (IDF Spokesman, October 19, 2009).

● **October 18:** A Molotov cocktail was thrown at Israeli vehicles northeast of Ramallah. There were no casualties and no damage was done. Stones were thrown at an Israeli vehicle southwest of Bethlehem. There were no casualties but the vehicle was damaged (IDF Spokesman, October 18, 2009).

● **October 17:** Molotov cocktails were thrown at an Israeli vehicle southwest of Hebron. An Israeli civilian sustained minor injuries. Stones were thrown at Israeli vehicles southwest of Ramallah and southwest of Bethlehem. There were no casualties but the vehicles were damaged (IDF Spokesman, October 17, 2009).

● **October 16:** Stones were thrown at Israeli vehicles in two separate incidents northeast of Ramallah. There were no casualties but the vehicles were damaged (IDF Spokesman, October 16, 2009).

● **October 15:** Stones were thrown at an Israeli vehicle northwest of Ramallah. An Israeli civilian sustained minor injuries. Stones were thrown at Israeli vehicles north of Ramallah, north of Hebron and east of Qalqiliya, and in other locations in Judea and Samaria (IDF Spokesman, October 15, 2009).

● **October 13:** Stones were thrown at an Israeli vehicle southwest of Bethlehem. There were no casualties but the vehicle was damaged (IDF Spokesman, October 13).

## Reactions to the Human Rights Council's decision to adopt the recommendations of the Gaza Strip



**The Goldstone Report shackles Israel**  
(Al-Bayan Center website, Gulf States, October 18, 2009).

■ After two days of deliberations (October 15-16), the Human Rights Council in Geneva endorsed the Palestinian endorsed proposal, which does not condemn Hamas, to **adopt the Goldstone Report and its conclusions**. The proposal, which does not condemn Hamas, calls for the UN General Assembly to debate the Report and for the Secretary General to update the Security Council on the measures taken by Israel to implement the Report's conclusions. It also recommends raising the issue at the General Assembly's next session (ReliefWeb, October 17, 2009).

■ According to the proposal, the HRC strongly condemns Israel's actions in the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, condemns the continued building in the settlements and the so-called lack of Israeli cooperation with the Goldstone Committee, and calls for both sides to report on the progress of their investigation into the events mentioned in the Report. The decision was passed by a 25-vote majority (among those voting in favor were Russia, India and China) with six votes against (including Italy, Hungary and the Ukraine) and 11 abstentions (such as Japan, Norway and Belgium). Five countries did not participate in the vote, including France and Britain.

■ **The Palestinian Authority and Hamas** rushed to celebrate the results of the vote. Senior Palestinian Authority spokesmen said that they intended to promote the implementation of the Goldstone Report and to fight Israel's so-called "war crimes" in **international** (the UN General Assembly and Security Council), **legal** (the International Criminal Court) and **Arab forums**. At the end of its weekly meeting, the Salam Fayyad government announced that it had would adopt the Report's conclusions and appoint a team to promote them to the international community (Wafa News Agency, October 19, 2009).

■ **Hamas** was quick to congratulate itself on its "victory" over Israel (and the Palestinian Authority), claiming that the Report cleared it of all terrorist attacks carried out from the Gaza Strip and that it had also been found innocent of using civilians as human shields. It said it would meet

its responsibility and appoint an **investigatory committee**.<sup>2</sup> Concurrently, the Hamas de-facto administration is trying to refute the accusations against it which do appear in the Report. The so-called “minister of justice” of the Hamas de-facto administration was appointed to “investigate” them, especially those relating to the persecution and execution of Fatah activists during Operation Cast Lead.



Mahmoud Abbas praises the Goldstone Report  
(Wafa News Agency, October 17, 2009).

## The Northern Front

### Another Hezbollah arms cache explodes south of the Litani River

■ At 21:15 at night on October 12, 2009, there was a loud explosion at the house of Hezbollah operative Sayid Issa in the Lebanese village of Tair Filsay, 15 kilometers, or 9.3 miles, northeast of the Lebanese city of Tyre, south of the Litani River. The house served as an arms cache for Hezbollah, and the explosion apparently injured several Lebanese, including the owner of the house.<sup>3</sup>



UNIFIL forces examine the exterior and interior of the site of the explosion  
(Hezbollah's Al-Intiqad website, October 13, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> For further information see our October 18, 2009 bulletin “Palestinian, Iranian and international reactions to the Human Rights Council’s decision to endorse the findings of the Goldstone Report (Update No. 1)” at [http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam\\_multimedia/English/eng\\_n/pdf/hamas\\_e086.pdf](http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/hamas_e086.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> There are **conflicting reports** about the number of casualties. Hezbollah and the Lebanese army claimed that only one individual was injured. Various media reported five killed (Reuters, October 12, 2009), two killed (Al-Arabia TV, October 12, 2009), or one killed (AP, October 12, 2009).



■ As in the past, Hezbollah was quick to contain the event and **cover up the evidence** proving it maintained an arms cache in a civilian area and thus violated UN Security Council Resolution 1701. Immediately after the explosion, Hezbollah operatives closed the area to UNIFIL and Lebanese army forces and using large trucks, began transferring the remaining weapons to an arms cache in the center of the village of **Dir Qanoun al-Nahar**, about three kilometers, or 1.8 miles, southwest of Tair Filsay. A film shot by the Israeli Air Force shows the weapons being removed from the house, which included **rockets and rocket launchers**. Only two hours and 45 minutes later, when the transfer had been completed, were UNIFIL and Lebanese army forces “allowed” by Hezbollah to enter the area.<sup>4</sup>

■ An IDF film issued after the event clearly shows Hezbollah's modus operandi for such cases, similar to that used after an arms cache in the village of Khirbet Silim exploded on July 14, 2009. UNIFIL's Deputy Spokesperson was quick to state that UNIFIL knew of the existence of the IDF film but **had not used it** during its investigation of the event (AP, October 17, 2009).

■ **Yasmina Bouziane**, the UNIFIL spokesperson, said that the investigation had not yet been completed and that the findings were being analyzed. Once that had been done, she said, the results would be made known to the relevant parties (Al-Markazia News Agency, Lebanon, October 15, 2009). Sources within the Lebanese government are weighing the possibility of lodging a complaint against Israel at the UN for its having sent an unmanned aerial vehicle to the area of the explosion to document the events (*Al-Nahar*, Lebanon, October 15, 2009).

■ **Hezbollah**, which tried to minimize the importance of the incident, issued a video in an attempt to refute what it called “the Israeli version.” According to Hezbollah, the rocket in the IDF film is the “door of the garage” where the explosion occurred (a baseless claim). **Ibrahim al-Moussawi**, responsible for Hezbollah propaganda, criticized the fact that many media, including the Lebanese News Agency, had adopted the Israeli report of the events at Tair Filsay, and called on the Lebanese minister of information to investigate the issue (Al-Manar TV, October 15, 2009).



**Hezbollah arms cache which exploded in Tair Filsay (October 12, 2009).**

<sup>4</sup> For further information see our October 14, 2009 bulletin “Explosions at Hezbollah arms caches in villages south of the Litani (Tair Filsay and Khirbet Silim) prove the organization maintains an active military infrastructure in south Lebanon...” at [http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam\\_multimedia/English/eng\\_n/pdf/hezbollah\\_e014.pdf](http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/hezbollah_e014.pdf).

## Developments in the Gaza Strip

### The crossings between Israel and the Gaza Strip

■ The crossings between Israel and the Gaza Strip were open during the past week and 442 had delivered supplies.

### Brother of Hamas spokesman, detained in Egypt, dies, causing tension between Hamas and Egypt

■ **Yussef Abu Zuhri**, brother of Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri, died in an Egyptian jail where he had been imprisoned by the Egyptian authorities since April 2009. Hamas claimed he had been tortured to death:

● Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** said that his brother had been tortured in jail, including electric shocks. He called on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to investigate and bring to trial those guilty of torturing his brother (Al-Jazeera TV, Al-Aqsa TV and Hamas' Palestine-Info website, October 13, 2009).

● **Musa Abu Marzuk**, head of Hamas' political bureau in the Gaza Strip, demanded the release of Hamas operatives imprisoned in Egypt as a condition for Hamas' signing the Egyptian reconciliation initiative. (*Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, October 16, 2009).

■ **Hamdi Abdel Karim**, spokesman for the Egyptian ministry of the interior, denied the accusation that Yussef Abu Zuhri died as a result torture, claiming he died of heart failure (Agence France-Presse, October 13, 2009). **The Muslim Brotherhood faction** in the Egyptian Parliament demanded that the authorities investigate the death immediately and turn their findings over to the court (Muslim Brotherhood website, October 13, 2009).<sup>5</sup>



The Abu Zuhri family in Gaza holds a press conference (Al-Aqsa TV, October 19, 2009).

## The Internal Palestinian Arena

### Hamas undermines the reconciliation agreement with Fatah

■ Egypt acceded to Hamas' demands and on October 16 announced that the **signing of the internal Fatah-Hamas reconciliation agreement**, scheduled for October 26, **would be postponed**. According to a senior Egyptian official, it would not be signed until "a suitable atmosphere has been created" on the Palestinian side (Middle East News Agency, October 16, 2009). According to senior Hamas figure **Muhammad Nizal**, Hamas had reservations regarding the wording of the agreement, one of them being that it did not relate to Hamas' basic positions, including the "**resistance**" [i.e., terrorism and violence] (Interview with Russia Today TV, October 15, 2009).

■ Additional sources within Hamas and the other Palestinian terrorist organizations criticized the lack of the so-called "right to resistance" [i.e., the use of terrorism and violence] in the Egyptian initiative. **Abu Obeida**, spokesman for the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military-terrorist wing, told *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* that **Hamas would not disarm until "the last Zionist soldier leaves Palestine."** Asked if he meant the territories of 1967 or 1948, he said that he was referring to "historical Palestine" [i.e., greater Palestine, which includes the State of Israel]. He added that Hamas would not agree to the prohibition in the Egyptian initiative against the establishment of armed groups except for the security forces, if the reference was to the "resistance" (*Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, October 16, 2009).

■ The Palestinian rejectionist terrorist organizations based in Damascus also opposed the Egyptian reconciliation initiative, saying that they did not intend to sign it. **Khaled Abu Al-Majid**, secretary general of the Popular Struggle Front said that "the Palestinian factions will not sign the Egyptian document unless it includes the Palestinians' rights and principles and guarantees the right to resist the Zionist occupation" (Agence France-Presse, October 15, 2009).

### The Palestinian Authority's response

■ **Mahmoud Abbas** and the Palestinian Authority leadership accused Hamas of avoiding the agreement, stressing that the Palestinian Authority had agreed to all the articles of the Egyptian initiative. For example:

- During a meeting with Spanish Prime Minister Jose Zapatero, **Mahmoud Abbas** said that the Palestinian Authority had agreed to all the articles of the Egyptian reconciliation initiative. He also said that the PA's final response would depend on Hamas' answer (Palestinian TV, October 15, 2009).

- **Azzam al-Ahmed**, chairman of the Fatah faction in the Palestinian Legislative Council, went to Egypt to meet with senior members of Egyptian intelligence to give them the PA's response to the Egyptian reconciliation document. He said that Fatah had **ratified the**



**document in its entirety** and had kept its reservations to itself in order not to present obstacles to an agreement's being reached (Wafa News Agency, October 15, 2009).

■ Mahmoud Abbas gave a speech at the Arab-American University in Jenin strongly attacking Hamas, **calling on it to agree to elections and denouncing the senior members of the organization who had fled to Sinai in ambulances during Operation Cast Lead**. He accused Hamas of responsibility for the so-called "war crimes" committed by Israel in the Gaza Strip, after Hamas had refused to extend the lull during the period immediately preceding Operation Cast Lead (Mehr News Agency, October 13, 2009). In a speech given on October 16 at the opening of the first session of Fatah's new revolutionary council, he said that elections to Palestinian institutions would take place on **January 25, 2010** unless the reconciliation document were signed, in which case the Palestinian Authority agreed to compromise and postpone the elections to the middle of 2010. He claimed Hamas was using various pretexts to avoid a reconciliation, among them using the Goldstone Report. He said that **"...now, after the Goldstone affair is over, they are looking for [other] excuses to delay and sabotage"** (Palestinian TV, October 17, 2009).