



**Intelligence and Terrorism
Information Center**

News of Terrorism and the Israeli- Palestinian Conflict

December 15-22, 2009

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From The Times
December 21, 2009

Hamas using English law to demand arrest of Israeli leaders for war crimes

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TIMES RECOMMENDS

Article in the online edition of the London Times about the legal campaign waged by Hamas against Israeli public figures, including the arrest warrant issued for former Israeli Defense Minister Tzipi Livni (Times Online, December 21, 2009).

Overview

- This past week two rockets fell in the western Negev. Hamas continued its policy of terrorist activity restraint.
- According to reports in the Israeli and Arab media, the negotiations for the release of abducted Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit are at a crossroads, and the Israeli government may reach a decision regarding a possible deal. The Israeli "Forum of Seven" (seven key ministers) met for intensive deliberations. Hamas expects to be informed of the Israeli position to make its own decisions.
- The PLO's Central Council voted to continue Mahmoud Abbas' term as "president" of the Palestinian Authority until elections are held (at a date yet to be decided). Hamas criticized the decision, claiming it had no legal validity.

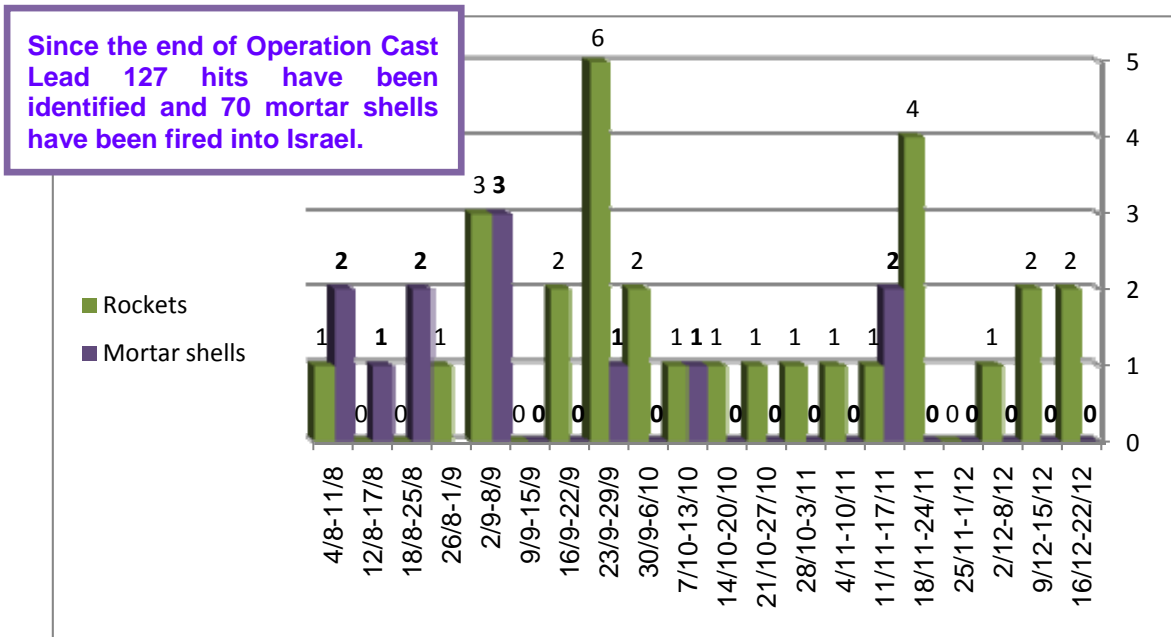
Important Events

The Gaza Strip

Rocket and mortar shell fire

- During the past week two rocket hits were identified in the western Negev (December 16). They fell in open areas, there were no casualties and no damage was done.

Rocket and mortar shells fired into Israeli territory¹



Judea and Samaria

Counterterrorism activities

- The Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities and detained Palestinians suspected of terrorist activities. This past week incidents continued, mainly involving stones thrown at Israeli vehicles. Three Israeli civilians sustained minor injuries.

- The more noteworthy incidents were the following:

- **December 20:** An IDF force at a checkpoint in the northern Jordan Valley discovered two pipe bombs hidden in the tools of Palestinians (IDF Spokesman, December 20, 2009).
- **December 20:** Stones were thrown at Israeli vehicles southwest of Bethlehem. Three Israeli civilians, one a woman, sustained minor injuries. Stones were also thrown at an Israeli

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

bus southwest of Bethlehem. There were no casualties but the vehicle was damaged (IDF Spokesman, December 20, 2009).

- **December 17:** Stones were thrown at an Israeli vehicle southwest of Bethlehem. There were no casualties but the vehicle was damaged (IDF Spokesman, December 17, 2009).
- **December 15:** An IDF force southwest of Bethlehem prevented five Palestinians from throwing Molotov cocktails (IDF Spokesman, December 15, 2009).
- **December 15:** Stones were thrown at an Israeli vehicle south of Nablus. There were no casualties but the vehicle was damaged. Stones were also thrown at an Israeli bus west of Ramallah. There were no casualties but the bus was damaged (IDF Spokesman, December 15, 2009).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Gaza Strip Crossings

- The crossings between Israel and the Gaza Strip were open throughout the week for the passage of 290 trucks delivering supplies.
- A convoy of European humanitarian assistance for the Gaza Strip called "Lifeline-3" is expected to enter the Gaza Strip on December 27 through the Rafah crossing. The convoy of 250 trucks and 300 individuals is headed by George Galloway, a pro-Palestinian Member of the British Parliament. A Syrian convoy from an entity calling itself the "Supreme Popular Syrian Committee for the Support of the Palestinian People and the Resistance to the Zionist Enterprise" is expected to join the Lifeline-3 convoy on the Turkey-Syria border (Syrian News Agency, December 19, 2009).

Constructing a Wall Along the Egypt-Gaza Strip Border

- The Egyptians have begun the construction of an underground wall along the Egypt-Gaza Strip border. The wall, made of steel plates, will be nine kilometers (5.6 miles) long and very deep. It is being built to prevent smuggling from Egypt to the Gaza Strip through the tunnels, an important pipeline for weapons and other commodities entering the Gaza Strip. Large cranes, excavation equipment and many workers have been brought to the site.



The Egyptians excavate to build the underground steel wall in Rafah (Felesteen, December 18, 2009).

- The construction of the wall has made the Gazans **very afraid** that it will cause a lack of basic products, fuel and raw materials, which will turn lead to a rise in prices. Some Gazans have already started hoarding food and raw materials. Palestinian media commentators claim that by constructing the wall, Egypt is trying to pressure the heads of Hamas to sign the internal Palestinian reconciliation document and compromise on the issue of Gilad Shalit (Hamas' *Al-Risala*, December 20, 2009).

- The Hamas heads view the wall as a serious blow to the Gazan economy and it may also be assumed that **they are concerned it will cause difficulties in smuggling weapons into the Gaza Strip**. They therefore asked the Egyptians to freeze the building because, they claim, the Gaza Strip does not threaten Egyptian security in any way:
 - **Mahmoud al-Zahar**, Hamas spokesman in the Gaza Strip, said that Gaza had never been a threat to Egypt and that a team had been appointed [apparently by Hamas] to gather information about the wall. It would present its findings in the coming days (Qatar's *Al-Sharq*, December 16, 2009).
 - **Fawzi Barhoum**, Hamas spokesman in the Gaza Strip, said that the wall was being built as part of an American plan devised under President Bush, and that its objective was "to strangle one and half million Palestinians in Gaza." He said that the Gaza Strip did not threaten Egypt's security in any way. He also criticized what he called Mahmoud Abbas' support for the wall, saying the latter's remarks support the continuation of the "siege" of the Gaza Strip (Hamas' Palestine-Info website, December 19, 2009).
 - **Sami Abu Zuhri**, Hamas spokesman in the Gaza Strip, during a Hamas-organized demonstration in Gaza City called for the building of the wall to be stopped, calling it "a steel wall of death" which would "strangle the Palestinian people," and warned of its serious consequences. He also criticized Egypt, which was, he said, "abdicating [its] moral and religious responsibility" (Hamas' Palestine-Info website, December 22, 2009).
 - **Ihab al-Ghusein**, spokesman for the interior ministry of the de facto Hamas administration, also said that the Gaza Strip was not a danger to Egypt. He said the (so-

called) “ Hamas government ” was worried by the construction of the wall which would, he said, increase pressure on the population, which the Hamas government might not be able to withstand or control.

- The opposition of Hamas (and other elements in the Gaza Strip) was expressed in various ways:
 - “ Egyptian security sources ” said that armed Palestinians had shot at the unit constructing the wall, damaging equipment. Egypt declared an emergency security situation and reinforced the area (Ma’an News Agency, December 17, 2009).
 - On December 12 Hamas called on the Gazan population to participate in a mass rally on the Egyptian border at the Rafah crossing to protest the construction of the wall. Despite the Gazans’ worries, the turnout was poor and few people participated in the rally.



Protest demonstration of Gazans at Rafah (Hamas’ Palestine-info website, December 22, 2009).



Egypt, Israel and the United States join forces to dig the foundations for the wall, a cartoon by Hamas-affiliated Omayya Joha (Al-Risala, December 21, 2009).

- Several Egyptian newspapers devoted editorials to the danger facing Egypt from the arms smuggling and the tunnels, and stressed **Egypt’s right to defend its sovereignty and security**. They also criticized Hamas and its accusations that Egypt was participating in the so-called “ siege ” of the Gaza Strip (*Ruz Al-Yusuf*, *Al-Ahram*, December 21, 2009).

Negotiations for the Release of Gilad Shalit

A Possible Breakthrough?

- According to reports in the Israeli and Arab media, the negotiations for the release of Gilad Shalit, the Israeli soldier abducted three and a half years ago, is at a crossroads and a decision may be made by the Israeli government and Hamas to finalize a deal. According to an article in the Israeli daily *Haaretz* on December 22, the Israel “ Forum of Seven ” has held intensive deliberations. The article also noted that “ senior sources in Jerusalem ” were of the opinion that Israel would respond positively to the German offer, but would demand that most of the prisoners who

committed serious offensives be deported abroad or to the Gaza Strip, and not return to Judea and Samaria.

■ According to **Izzat al-Rishq**, a member of Hamas' political bureau, after the Israeli cabinet makes its decision, the German mediator will present it to the Hamas leadership which will decide if it is acceptable, or if more time is necessary for negotiations because of the so-called Israeli "stubbornness" (Al-Alam TV, December 21, 2009).

The Political Struggle

Mahmoud Abbas' Speech at the PLO's Central Committee Convention

■ Palestinian Authority Chairman **Mahmoud Abbas** gave a speech at the PLO's Central Committee convention in Ramallah on December 15. His main points were the following:

- Regarding Israel's decision to freeze building in the settlements, he said it "is not a break [in the settlements]." He said that when the building did stop and Israel recognized the borders the Palestinians demand, nothing would prevent the Palestinians from renewing the negotiations.
- He again mentioned the refugees and said that the Palestinians insisted on "a just solution, agreed on according to [UN General Assembly] Resolution 194" and in accordance with the Arab peace initiative.
- He said the Palestinians rejected the establishment of a state with temporary borders but **did not intend to resort to violence**.
- He said he had instructed the Palestinian ambassadors to the United Nations and to the [UN] Human Rights Council to **deal seriously with the Goldstone Report** "to find out the truth," adding that treating the issue would continue (Wafa News Agency, December 15, 2009).

The Palestinian Authority Examines the Possibilities of Appealing to the International Court to Establish a Palestinian State

■ **Saeb Erekat**, chief PLO negotiator, told the Wafa News Agency that in looking for support for the establishment of a Palestinian state, the Palestinian Authority's efforts went beyond an appeal to the Security Council. He said **an appeal had been lodged with the International Court for a decision about "the Israeli occupation of the 1967 territories."** He denied that the Palestinian Authority was planning to call an emergency meeting of the Arab League, but said that it was coordinating measures with Arab states for an appeal to the Security Council (Wafa News Agency, December 19, 2009).

Hamas Behind the British Warrant Issued for the Arrest of Tzipi Livni²

■ **Diaa' al-Madhoun**, the judge in the de facto Hamas administration, heading **Al-Tawthiq**, a committee documenting the (so-called) "Israeli war crimes," was interviewed by the Hamas-affiliated Palestinian media. He said that Al-Tawthiq was behind the warrant issued in Britain for the arrest of Tzipi Livni, former Israeli defense minister. He said that Al-Tawthiq had formulated a clear strategy of pursuing (so-called) "Israeli war criminals" and would continue "to pursue them to bring them to trial" (Al-Bayan Center website, December 15, 2009). Interviewed by the London *Times* on December 21, he said that they had "all the political and military leaders of the occupation in our sights."

■ Al-Madhoun said that when the **Al-Tawthiq committee** heard Tzipi Livni was planning to visit Britain on December 13, it lodged suits in British courts in coordination with a lawyer practicing in Britain named **Tayib Ali** (who participated in the affair of the warrant issued for the arrest of Ehud Barak) and a group of other lawyers. He said the suit was a class action pursued by a number of victims of Operation Cast Lead who had been wounded or killed during the December 27 bombing of the police station in Gaza City (Website of the interior ministry of Ismail Haniya's de facto Hamas administration, December 15, 2009).

The Internal Palestinian Arena

Mahmoud Abbas Will Not Resign

■ Mahmoud Abbas, chairman of the Palestinian Authority, was interviewed on political issues by Palestinian TV. His main points were the following:

- **He does not intend to resign** but will not run for office in the next elections when they are held. He said that his position on the issue had not changed, and that he would remain in his role only if the Palestinian people asked him to.
- **The armed intifada**, he said, **destroyed the Palestinians**. Violence was useless because the balance of power was not tipped in the Palestinians' favor and the most advantageous form of "resistance" was "popular resistance." He mentioned the statements made by Hamas about a "wise resistance" [i.e., a Hamas-controlled "resistance"] and said that anyone who declared an armed struggle while still under siege would be the only loser (Palestinian TV, December 17, 2009).

² For further information see the December 17, 2009 bulletin "A Hamas 'ministry of justice' committee called Al-Tawthiq (Documentation) claims to be behind the arrest warrant issued in Britain for former Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni. It is part of the Hamas campaign to pursue Israelis in Europe in the name of the victims of Operation Cast Lead" at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/hamas_e091.pdf.

Mahmoud Abbas' Term Extended by the PLO's Central Council

■ On December 16 the PLO's Central Council voted to **extend Mahmoud Abbas' term as "president" of the Palestinian Authority until the elections** [for which a date has not yet been set]. The decision was strongly criticized by Hamas spokesmen:

- **Salah al-Bardawil**, Hamas spokesman in the Palestinian Legislative Council, told Al-Jazeera TV that the [Central] Council had taken greater responsibility on itself than what it was entitled to and had given itself authority greater than what it had to begin with (Al-Jazeera TV, December 16, 2009).

- **Ahmed Bahar**, deputy chairman of the Palestinian Legislative Council and a senior Hamas figure, criticized the decision, calling it "a false constitutional maneuver to legitimize and extend the chairman's tenure even though his office has no validity" (*Felesteen*, December 18, 2009).

- **Khalil al-Hayeh**, senior Hamas figure, said that the Central Council did not need declarations aimed to extend Mahmoud Abbas' term of office illegally (Hamas' Palestine-Info website, December 17, 2009).



PLO Central Council convention (Al-Quds TV, December 16, 2009).