



**Intelligence and Terrorism  
Information Center**

## **News of Terrorism and the Israeli- Palestinian Conflict**

**February 2-9, 2010**



**Nabil Shaath, senior Fatah figure, during an exceptional visit to the Gaza Strip  
(Wafa News Agency, February 3, 2010).**

### **Overview**

- This past week sporadic rocket fire continued from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory. Two rocket hits were identified in open areas near Israeli villages. In response the Israeli Air Force attacked targets in the southern Gaza Strip.
- According to the February 8 edition of the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas will respond positively to the American suggestion to indirect negotiations with Israel by means of proximity talks. However, he will ask for clarifications from the American administration and will consult with Arab countries before giving the United States his final answer. Senior Palestinian Authority figures denied the information in the article.
- There has recently been a significant increase in the number of senior Fatah and Palestinian Authority figures participating in demonstrations against the security fence held on weekends in Judea and Samaria. It is part of the policy of "popular resistance" led by Mahmoud Abbas, which is supported and encouraged by the Palestinian press affiliated with the PA.

# Important Events

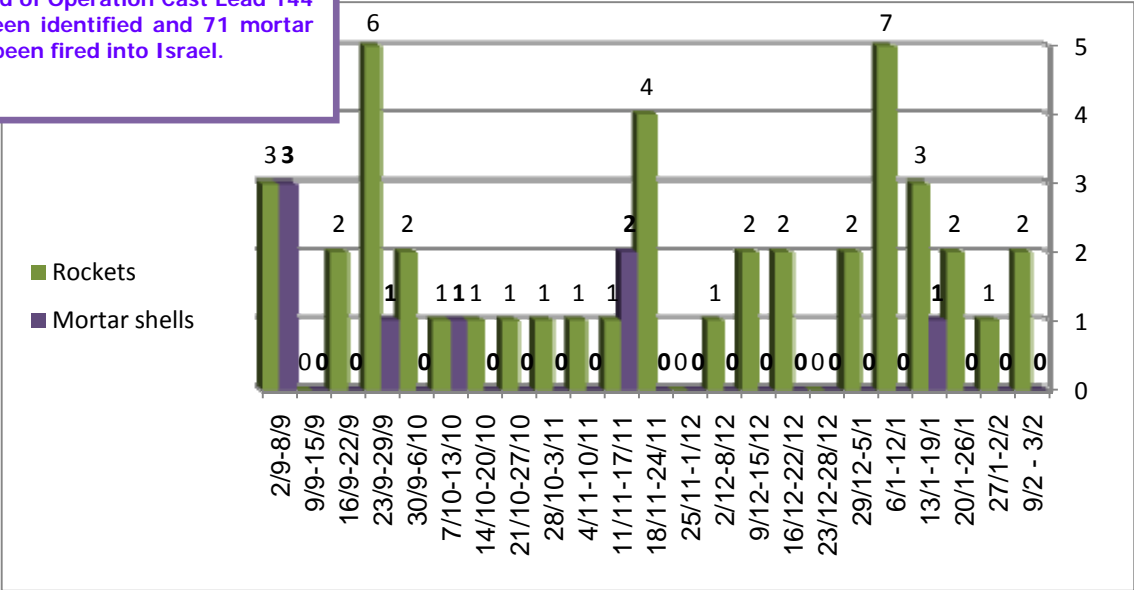
## Gaza Strip

### Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire

■ This past week there was sporadic rocket fire into the western Negev. Two rocket hits were identified in open areas near population centers (one on February 3, the other on February 7). There were no casualties and no damage was done.

### Rockets and Mortar Shells Fired into Israeli Territory<sup>1</sup>

Since the end of Operation Cast Lead 144 hits have been identified and 71 mortar shells have been fired into Israel.



## Israeli Air Force Activity

■ In response to the rocket fire the Israeli Air Force struck suspicious structures in the vicinity of the Dahaniya airport and a tunnel near the Rafah crossing used to smuggle weapons into the Gaza Strip.

## Judea and Samaria

### Counterterrorism Activities

■ Israeli security forces continued their preventive counterterrorism activities this past week, detaining Palestinians suspected of involvement in terrorist activities. In three instances IDF patrols and posts were attacked with stones and Molotov cocktails. One soldier sustained minor injuries.

- Among the incidents were the following:
  - **February 8** – Three Molotov cocktails were thrown at an Israeli vehicle northwest of Ramallah. Stones were thrown at an Israeli vehicle west of Jenin. The stone-thrower was

<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.

detained. A pipe bomb was thrown at an IDF force operating southwest of Bethlehem. There were no casualties and no damage was done (IDF Spokesman, February 8, 2010).

- **February 7** – Stones were thrown at an Israeli vehicle south of Bethlehem. There were no casualties but the vehicle was damaged (IDF Spokesman, February 7, 2010).
- **February 6** – A Border Police force detained two Palestinians who were about to throw Molotov cocktails at a Police post east of Bethlehem (IDF Spokesman, February 6, 2010). Stones were thrown at an IDF patrol northwest of Bethlehem. One soldier sustained minor injuries. An army vehicle was damaged (IDF Spokesman, February 6, 2010).
- **February 5** – Stones were thrown at an Israeli vehicle southwest of Bethlehem. There were no casualties but the vehicle was damaged (IDF Spokesman, February 5, 2010).
- **February 4** – Stones were thrown at an Israeli vehicle southwest of Bethlehem (IDF Spokesman, February 4, 2010).
- **February 3** – Two Molotov cocktails were thrown at an Israeli vehicle southwest of Bethlehem. There were no casualties but the vehicle was damaged (IDF Spokesman, February 3, 2010).

## Developments in the Gaza Strip

- The crossings between Israel and the Gaza Strip were open all week; **405 trucks** entered the Strip.

## The Political Struggle

### Conflicting Reports about the Palestinian Authority's Position on Indirect Negotiations

■ According to a report in the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas has decided to respond positively to the American suggestion to hold indirect negotiations with Israel by means of **proximity talks conducted by George Mitchell**. "Senior Palestinian sources" confirmed that Mahmoud Abbas had agreed in principle to the indirect negotiations. According to the sources, he will ask the American administration for clarification on several points and then consult with leaders of Arab countries before giving his final answer. According to the *Haaretz* report, he will probably answer in the affirmative, because rejecting the offer will present the Palestinian Authority in a particularly negative light (*Haaretz*, February 8, 2010).

- The item in the Israeli press drew denials from senior Palestinian figures:

- **Saeb Erekat**, head of the PLO's negotiating team, said that the recent items about indirect negotiations were putting the cart before the horse. He added that Israel had imposed preconditions and refused to commit itself to the 1967 borders and other issues of the final status agreement. He said the Palestinian leadership still expected clarifications from the United States about sources of authority and a timetable for the indirect negotiations, and only after it had received them would Mahmoud Abbas announce his decision (Wafa News Agency, February 8, 2010).
- **Izzam al-Ahmed**, chairman of the Fatah faction in the Palestinian Legislative Council, denied the *Haaretz* report, saying that the Palestinian Authority expected responses from the United States and Arab countries (Sawa Radio, February 8, 2010).
- **Sabri Sidam**, advisor to Mahmoud Abbas and chairman of Fatah's Revolutionary Council, said that the negotiations had to be direct and would be held only after Israel had agreed to a complete freeze of building in the settlements (Safa News Agency, February 8, 2010).

### Incitement on the Palestinian Authority TV Channel

- On Friday, February 29, the preacher in the mosque in the village of **Bourin** (in the Nablus district) delivered a **hate sermon** against Israel and the Jews which was **broadcast by the Palestinian Authority television channel**. The sermon was delivered in view of the demolition order issued by Israel for a mosque illegally built in Bourin. Following the order, a meeting was held by senior members of the Palestinian Authority and the PLO's executive committee, among them **Mahmoud al-Habash**, minister of religious endowments, and **Maher Ghanim**, minister of state.
- Some of the statements from the sermon were the following (Palestinian Authority TV, according to MEMRI,<sup>2</sup> January 29, 2010).
  - "This is clear evidence of the hatred they harbor, and of their unparalleled racism. This is the Nazism of the 20th [sic] century."
  - "The Jews are the enemies of Allah and His messenger... the enemies of humanity in general, and of the Palestinians in particular."
  - "Jews will always be Jews. Even if donkeys cease to bray, dogs cease to bark, wolves cease to howl, and snakes cease to bite, the Jews will not cease to be hostile to the Muslims."

### Senior Fatah and Palestinian Authority Figures Participate in the Demonstrations against the Security Fence

- There has recently been a **significant increase in the number of senior Fatah and Palestinian Authority figures** participating in the weekend **demonstrations against the security fence in Judea and Samaria**. Most of the demonstrators so far have been Palestinian

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.memritv.org/clip\\_transcript/en/2367.htm](http://www.memritv.org/clip_transcript/en/2367.htm)

activists led by **Mustafa Barghouti**. The following are examples of senior Fatah and Palestinian Authority figures who participated in demonstrations:

- **January 29** – At the demonstration at **Bila'in** (south of Ramallah), **Sultan Abu al-Einein**, a member of Fatah's Central Committee, was present; at **Maasra** (north of Bethlehem), **Tawfiq Tirawi**, a member of Fatah's Central Committee, was present; at **Bourin** (near Nablus), **Mahmoud al-Habash**, Palestinian Authority minister of endowments, was present.
- **January 22** – At the demonstration at **Maasra**, **Ismail Du'eik**, Palestinian Authority minister of agriculture, was present.
- **January 15** – At the demonstration at Dir Nazem (near Ramallah) **Tawfiq Tirawi** and **Mahmoud al-'Aalul**, members of Fatah's Central Committee, were present.

■ Senior Fatah and Palestinian Authority figures participated in demonstrations to **put into practice the policy of "popular resistance"** led by PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas. In a speech given at the convention of the Fatah Revolutionary Council on January 16, 2010, he called on senior Fatah figures to "go into the field." In addition **Tawfiq Tirawi**, a member of the PLO Central Committee, said that "Fatah will continue to support and take part in these tranquil demonstrations against the fence and the occupation in all the cities and villages..." (Wafa News Agency, January 15, 2010). The Palestinian Authority-affiliated press has recently published many articles encouraging the continuation of the "popular protest activity" [the Bila'in syndrome].<sup>3</sup>



**Tawfiq Tirawi, a member of the PLO's Central Committee, confronting IDF soldiers at Dir Nazem (Al-Ayam, January 15, 2010)**

<sup>3</sup> For further information see the February 2, 2010 bulletin, "News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (January 26-February 2, 2010)" at [http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam\\_multimedia/English/eng\\_n/pdf/ipc\\_e071.pdf](http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/ipc_e071.pdf).

## The Internal Palestinian Arena

### The Palestinian Authority to Hold Elections for Local Authorities in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip

- The Palestinian government has decided to **hold elections for all the local authorities in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip on July 17, 2010**. To that end it ordered the central elections committee to begin making the necessary arrangements, stressing that holding elections is a cornerstone in supporting the work program of the Palestinian Authority and its government to construct the [Palestinian] state's institutions (Wafa News Agency, February 8, 2010).
- Responding to the announcement, **Ziyad al-Tata**, minister for local authorities in the de facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip, said that the Hamas administration opposed the decision made by the Salam Fayyad government to hold elections, adding that they could not be held without national unity (Al-Quds website, February 8, 2010).

### Senior Fatah Figure Visits the Gaza Strip

- **Nabil Shaath**, member of Fatah's Central Committee, paid an exceptional visit to the **Gaza Strip** on February 3. He met with de facto Hamas administration head **Ismail Haniya** and senior Hamas figures **Khalil al-Hayeh** and **Ayman Tahe**, as well as senior Fatah figures. He said the objective of his visit was to fill the need for national unity and to end the internal Palestinian schism. He emphasized that he had not come to the Gaza Strip to negotiate but rather to help create an atmosphere of reconciliation, dialogue and unity, and that his visit had been decided on by Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas and Fatah's Revolutionary Council (Wafa News Agency, February 3, 2010).
- **Salah al-Bardawil**, senior Hamas figures in the Gaza Strip, issued a press release distributed by Hamas' information office in Gaza. It said that "the meeting was good, constructive and meant to break the political ice between Hamas and Fatah." It added that both sides had agreed that internal Palestinian reconciliation had to be completed, based on Egyptian guarantees. It also stated that a joint committee had been appointed to examine the problems existing on the ground between the two sides (Hamas' Palestine-info website, February 4, 2010).