



Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center

The cement shortage in the Gaza Strip makes it difficult to carry out rehabilitation works and improve the living conditions of the population. However, reliable intelligence indicates that Hamas uses cement for military needs as part of its overall strategy of giving priority to its military infrastructure over Gaza Strip residents' needs.

Overview

1. Cement is a vital commodity needed by the Hamas de-facto administration and Gaza Strip residents alike to **build new buildings and restore those buildings damaged in Operation Cast Lead. However, reliable intelligence information indicates that Hamas makes extensive use of cement to rebuild military infrastructure hit in Operation Cast Lead and to create new military infrastructure.** For example, Hamas establishes outposts, training compounds, and storage sites; digs defensive and offensive tunnels; and creates rocket launch sites lined with concrete.

2. Such activities are part of an **overall strategy of giving priority to the rehabilitation and buildup of military infrastructure over the needs of the population. Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mash'al said as much** at a conference in Damascus ("On the surface, [statements in the Gaza Strip] refer to reconciliation [between Hamas and Fatah] and rebuilding, however, what is not revealed is that **most of Hamas' funds and efforts are invested in the resistance and military preparations...**").

3. **In this state of affairs, Israel imposed restrictions on the import of cement into the Gaza Strip**, causing a cement shortage (considering the large quantities of cement needed for restoration). **Hamas was able to find partial solutions to those restrictions, mostly through its smuggling industry and self-production of cement and concrete.** However, those solutions cannot meet Hamas' plans.

4. Hamas seeks support from the international community **in acquiring cement, making use of propaganda to play up the issue of cement shortage.** Accordingly, humanitarian assistance to the Gaza Strip (such as the recent flotilla) included cement, while international aid organizations like Free Gaza are running a fundraiser with the purpose of purchasing cement for Hamas.

5. We believe that delivering significant quantities of cement to the Gaza Strip **will, indeed, help the population.** At the same time, **Hamas will attempt to divert meaningful quantities of it to military needs,** taking advantage of its control over the Gaza Strip and the inability of local civilian population to influence the priorities of the Hamas de-facto administration.

Recent evidence of Hamas' extensive use of cement for military needs

6. **According to reliable intelligence information from recent months** (based, among other things, on aerial photographs), **there has been a considerable increase in the use of cement and concrete by the Hamas military wing in the Gaza Strip.** The military wing **acts towards the rehabilitation and fortification of its military compounds and builds new offensive and defensive systems,** drawing also on the lessons learned in Operation Cast Lead. **A significant number of the military facilities are built in urban areas with civilian populations deep in Gaza Strip territory.** That is **part of the combat strategy adopted by Hamas** (which proved itself in Operation Cast Lead), **which builds most of its military infrastructure in densely-populated territory,** using civilians as human shields.

7. **The Hamas military wing** (Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades) **uses cement mostly for the following purposes:**

a. **Building military infrastructure:** building and repairing dozens of permanent outposts, training compounds, and weapons storehouses, using large quantities of cement.

b. **Digging tunnels:** building an infrastructure of underground tunnels lined with concrete for protection. **Hamas places considerable significance on its underground infrastructure, used for both defensive and offensive needs** (such as minimizing the exposure of terrorist operatives and munitions, transporting operatives between areas, and carrying out attacks by digging tunnels from the Gaza Strip to Israeli territory).

c. **Building launch sites for artillery weapons (such as rockets and mortars):** those launch sites are lined with concrete. **The positions dug at such launch sites provide an ability to launch rockets at Israel at the push of a button, making the presence of human operators near the rockets unnecessary.** This tactic is designed to keep rocket operators alive and to allow sustained fire with a uniform rate of fire and rocket output.

Sources of cement available to the Hamas military wing

8. Reliable intelligence information indicates that, in view of the restrictions imposed by Israel on importing cement to the Gaza Strip, Hamas employs several methods to obtain cement, **some of which is delivered to the military wing:**

a. **Hamas' smuggling industry**—the most common method of delivering cement to the Gaza Strip. The Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, smuggles large quantities for its needs through Hamas' tunnels along the border with Egypt. For example, on October 12, 2009, 30 tons of cement were smuggled from a tunnel in Rafah to one of Hamas' storage facilities.

b. **Self-production**—the Hamas military wing manufactures construction materials, including cement and concrete, in Gaza Strip factories which it closely supervises. The cement is manufactured from locally-available raw materials (such as fly ash and sea sand). For that purpose, Hamas built many new factories specifically affiliated with the military wing.




Cement factory owned by Hamas

c. **Use of Israeli construction materials**—Hamas makes use of construction materials from Israeli population centers abandoned during the disengagement. For that purpose, Hamas dismantles formerly-populated Israeli buildings.

d. **Taking over humanitarian assistance delivered to the Gaza Strip**—the Hamas de-facto administration receives the cement imported to the Gaza Strip as part of the aid delivered by international organizations or international aid convoys.

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POSTED IN **NEWS**

Normally we don't ask for donations for specific items, since all donations to our tax-exempt accounts in Cyprus or the U.S. are used to buy the boats or for operating costs. However, we are sending out this special appeal to the hundreds of you who have said, "But can't I contribute to something specific, something that I can be proud to buy and know will help the people of Gaza?" Therefore, we have set up our PayPal account at <http://www.freegaza.org/en/donate> to accept donations for cement and book bags. In the message section on PayPal, tell us you want the money to purchase cement or book bags. Or you can wire money into the Irish account designated below this announcement. We will use your donation for cement for reconstruction or book bags for the children if you designate it's for them.



The Free Gaza Movement calls on communities, schools, hospitals, trade unions and families across Ireland and the world to sponsor bags of cement and school supplies to send to Gaza. They will be loaded onto our Irish cargo ship, the MV Rachel Corrie, as part of an international flotilla of ships sailing to Gaza in May.

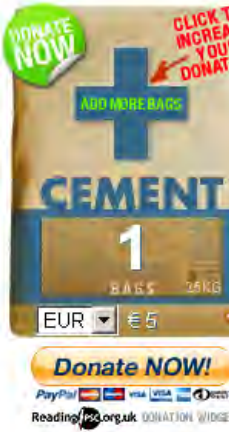
Just €5 will pay for a bag of cement to help the people of Gaza rebuild, supporting the Palestinian people and their refusal to be broken despite a devastating siege and Occupation. €5 for a bag of cement (or €10 for two bags, €20 for four bags, €100 for 20 bags) or €10 for a school/sports bag.

Other campaigns:

- Ireland
- Scotland
- Other countries

Other campaigns:

- Sweden



International Solidarity Movement

- Weekend demonstration commemorate Flotilla massacre
- Time to break the siege

Call to donate money for the purchase of cement for the Gaza Strip population (Free Gaza website, April 12, 2010). Free Gaza, one of the organizations which orchestrated the recent flotilla, avoids admitting that the cement was meant for the Hamas de-facto administration, perceived as illegitimate in many countries in the world, presenting it instead as humanitarian assistance to Gaza Strip residents.

Statement made by Khaled Mash'al on giving priority to the rehabilitation of Hamas' military infrastructure



Khaled Mash'al at the conference of Arab parties in Damascus (Flesteen al-Aan, November 12, 2009)

9. In the past, **Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mash'al admitted that Hamas allocated most of its financial resources in the Gaza Strip to building up its military infrastructure** at the expense of civilian rehabilitation of the Gaza Strip.

10. Speaking at a convention of the Arab parties in Damascus (November 12, 2009), Khaled Mash'al said that **most of Hamas' efforts in the Gaza Strip are targeted towards military preparations:** "On the surface, [statements in the Gaza Strip] refer to reconciliation [between Hamas and Fatah] and rebuilding, however, what is not revealed is that **most of Hamas' funds and efforts are invested in the resistance and military preparations...** We are intent on the resistance".¹

وفيما يتعلق بغزة، قال مشعل "ظاهر الصورة في غزة أنهم يتحدثون عن المصالحة والبناء، لكن باطن الصورة يقول إن معظم المال والجهد يذهب للمقاومة والاستعدادات العسكرية".. مؤكدا "نحن شغالين على المقاومة".

The original excerpt from Khaled Mash'al's statement

¹ For more information, see our November 17, 2009 Information Bulletin: "[Khaled Mashaal makes it clear that Hamas is determined to continue the path of "resistance" \(i.e., terrorism\) and that "other statements are political maneuvers."](#) He reveals that Hamas uses most of its financial resources in the Gaza Strip for military purposes rather than rebuilding".