



**The Meir Amit Intelligence
and Terrorism Information**

News of Terrorism and the Israeli- Palestinian Conflict

September 15-21, 2010



The aid convoy to the Gaza Strip organized by Viva Palestina and headed by George Galloway, reaches Paris (Viva Palestina website, September 21, 2010).

Overview

- This past week nine mortar shells were fired into Israeli territory, eight on one day. Some of them contained phosphorus. In response, the Israeli Air Force attacked terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip.
- An aid convoy organized by Viva Palestina left for the Gaza Strip. It is currently in France and from expects go to Italy, Turkey, Greece and Syria. From the Syrian port of Latakia it expects to sail to the port of El Arish. It expects to be joined by convoys from Middle East countries. The convoy will drive overland from El Arish and enter the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing.

Important Terrorism Events

Gaza Strip

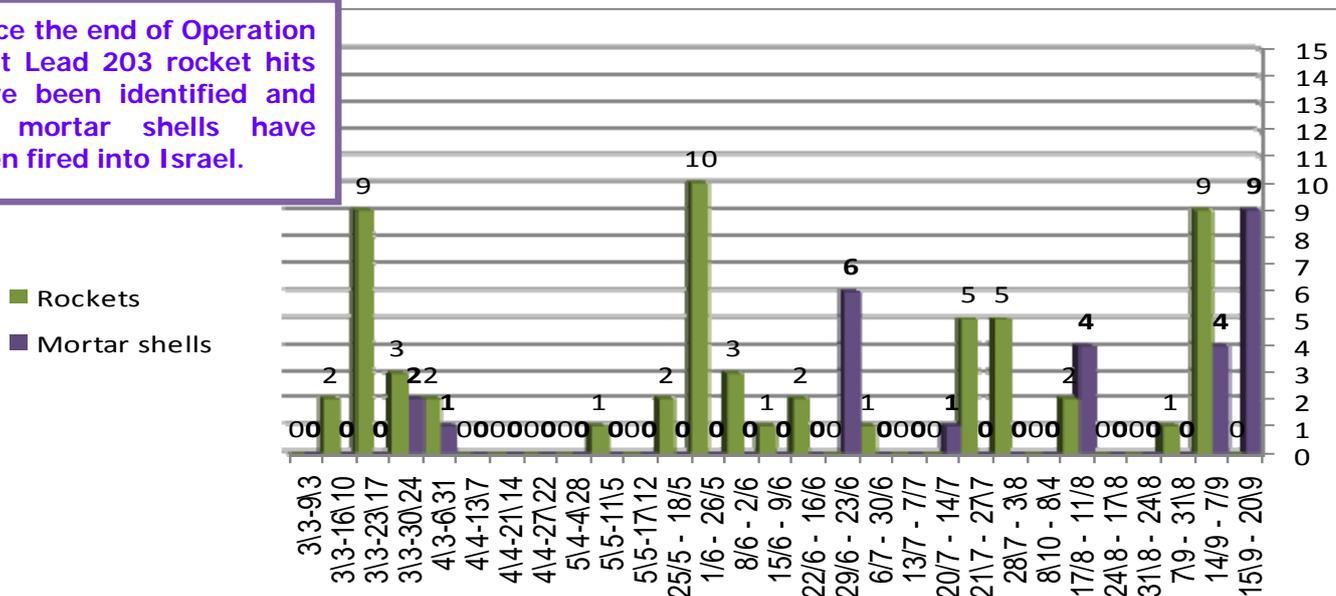
Mortar Fire

■ This past week the exceptional number of **nine mortar shells were fired into Israeli territory**, eight of them on September 15. They fell in open areas in the western Negev. There were no casualties and no damage was done. According to media reports, **some of the shells contained phosphorus**.

■ In response to the reports, Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** said that "phosphorus shells" were not fired into Israeli territory and that the reports were an Israeli attempt at escalation. However, an anonymous Palestinian operative said that phosphorus-containing rockets were in fact fired and that the material had been taken from shells used by Israel during Operation Cast Lead (Ynet, September 16, 2010).

Rocket and mortar shells fired into Israeli territory¹

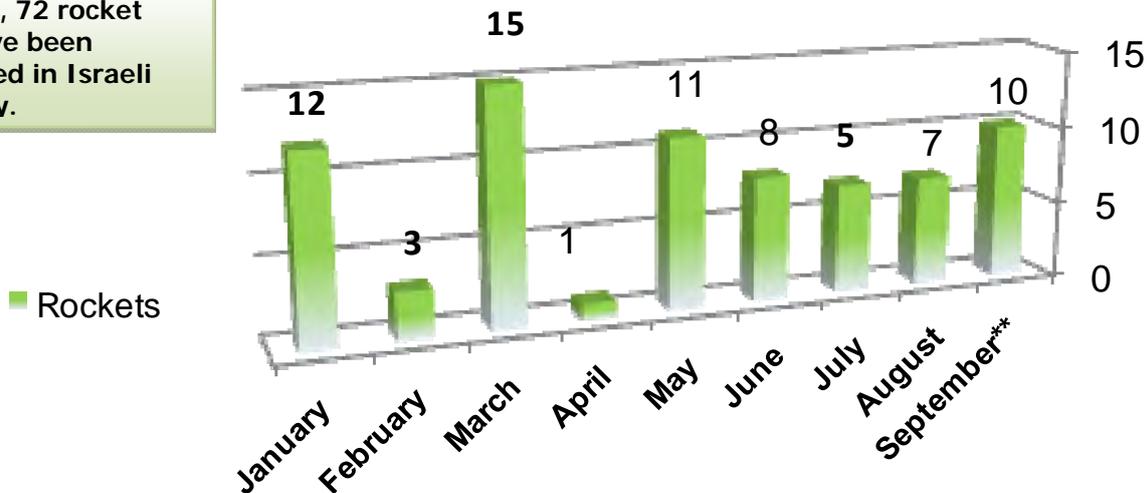
Since the end of Operation Cast Lead 203 rocket hits have been identified and 98 mortar shells have been fired into Israel.



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

Rocket Fire 2010, Monthly Distribution*

Since the beginning of 2010, 72 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory.



*Rocket hits identified in Israeli territory. A similar number misfire and customarily land inside the Gaza Strip.

* As of September 21, 2010.

Israeli Air Force Attacks

■ On September 15, in response to the mortar shell fire Israeli Air Force planes attacked terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip, among them a smuggling tunnel in the southern Gaza Strip and a Hamas weapons store. The media reported one dead and four wounded (Safa News Agency, Al-Jazeera TV and Ynet, September 15, 2010).

Egypt Army on Alert

Suspicious of Rocket Fire from Sinai Reported

■ The Palestinian media reported that Egyptian security forces in Sinai were put on alert following information that Palestinian operatives were planning to transfer rockets from the Gaza Strip to the Sinai Peninsula for launching into Israel (Ma'an News Agency, September 19, 2010).

Judea and Samaria

- This past week IDF forces detained several dozen Palestinians suspected of terrorist activity in Judea and Samaria (IDF Spokesman, September 20, 2010).
- On September 17, while detentions were being carried out, **Ayad Abu Shilabiya, a senior Hamas operative from Tulkarm, was shot and killed**. Following his death **Fathi al-Qirawi**, a Hamas member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, demanded that the Palestinian Authority stop negotiating with Israel (Hamas' daily *Felesteen*, September 19; Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website and Al-Jazeera TV, September 17, 2010).

Information about the Terrorist Shooting Attack at Bani Naim

- Anonymous Palestinian security sources reported that the terrorists who carried out the shooting attack at Bani Naim (southeast of Hebron) on August 31, 2010, in which four Israeli civilians were killed, admitted during interrogation that **they had been instructed to bury the bodies of the victims, take their Israeli identity cards and claim that they had abducted them**. According to the sources, the instructions were given following Hamas evaluations in Damascus and the Gaza Strip that an abduction would cause Israel to abandon the direct negotiations, impose a closure on the villages in Judea and Samaria, and perhaps even occupy some of Palestinian Authority territory. The sources claimed that **the attack was carried out by two armed Hamas operatives who shot at the car until they were certain that all the passengers were dead, but were forced to flee before they could complete the second stage of the plan** (*Al-Ahram*, September 20 2010).

The Peace Process

- On September 15, following the meeting at Sharm el-Sheikh, Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas met at the prime minister's home. Also present were American Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and American Special Envoy to the Middle East, George Mitchell.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas and American Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at the prime minister's home (Photo: Avi Ohayon for the Israeli Government Press Office, September 15,2010).

■ During the week the Palestinians made a number of resolute statements about the negotiations. The Palestinians said that they would not compromise on construction in the settlements or other matters of principles. The important points were the following:

- **Mahmoud Abbas**, chairman of the Palestinian Authority, said that the negotiations would continue as long as the moratorium on construction continued, but should it begin again, they would not continue "even for one more day" (*Haaretz*, September 20, 2010). He said he believed an agreement could be reached during the moratorium (Agence France-Presse, September 20, 2010). According to a senior figure in the Palestinian Authority who remained anonymous, Mahmoud Abbas again threatened to resign if negotiations with Israel failed. The figure said that the Palestinian Authority would abandon the negotiations immediately if Israel began construction in the settlements after September 26 (*Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, September 19, 2010)

- **Nabil Shaath** said that the Palestinian Authority would be willing to hold fast-track negotiations about borders. He claimed that there was a suggestion (apparently American) to freeze construction in the settlements for four more months, at the end of which there would be an agreement, and thus in any case the moratorium would continue. He also said that the Palestinian Authority would not compromise on the issue of the freeze, and claimed that continued construction would lead to "an escalation of the popular resistance and increased international support for the Palestinian position" (Voice of Palestine Radio, September 19, 2010).

- **Marwan Barghouti**, a member of Fatah's Central Committee imprisoned in Israel, claimed that the current negotiations were doomed to failure, just as the talks of the last two decades had failed. He said that although he agreed to the path of negotiations, the Palestinians had to focus on "achieving unity and internal reconciliation, and on broader participation in the popular resistance to the occupation" (Reuters, September 20, 2010).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Crossings

- This past week between 174 and 253 trucks entered the Gaza Strip daily. In addition, \$13.5 million was transferred to UNRWA for pay salaries. On September 20, 20 cars were allowed into the Gaza Strip, most of them used. It was the first time cars were permitted to enter since 2007 (Website of the Israeli Coordinator for the Territories and the *New York Times*, September 20, 2010).
- On September 20 construction work to widen the Kerem Shalom crossing was expected to be completed, making it possible to transport a greater volume of merchandise into the Gaza Strip.



Cars enter the Gaza Strip (Safa News Agency, September 20, 2010).

The Islamization of the Gaza Strip

- The "authority for political and moral guidance," part of the interior ministry of the de facto Hamas administration, said in an announcement that registration for a Qur'an memorization contest had begun, open to "members of military and civilian bodies of the interior ministry." Whoever demonstrates expertise in the Qur'an can expect to receive additional years of seniority toward his pension, in accordance with a decision made by the Hamas administration (Website of the de facto Hamas administration's ministry of information, September 19, 2010).
- The Palestinian media also reported that a hotel in the Gaza Strip was closed for three days by the Hamas police force because a woman there was found smoking a water pipe (Pal-press, September 16, 2010). In addition, the water park, which was closed a number of weeks ago by the Hamas police on the grounds that "licentious parties" were held there, was destroyed by armed men, and some of it was burned to the ground (*Haaretz* and the *Jerusalem Post*, September 19, 2010).



The water park after the fire (Safa News Agency, September 19, 2010).

Flotillas and Convoys to the Gaza Strip

Flotillas and Convoys Update

- This past week a Viva Palestina aid convoy left London for the Gaza Strip. Reports continue in the media of preparations for additional land and sea convoys.
- The convoy of Viva Palestina, an organization headed by George Galloway, left London on September 18 and is currently in **France**. It is expected to stop in **Paris** and **Lyon** and a number of smaller towns on the way. From there it will go to **Italy** and pass through Torino and Milan, and from there to **Greece**, **Turkey** and finally **Syria** (infopal.it website, September 18; Viva Palestina website, September 21, 2010). **The convoy expects to reach Syria on October 2 and from there leave for the Gaza Strip, reaching it on October 10 via the Rafah crossing** (Hamas' Palestine-info website, September 18, 2010). According to information previously issued by the organization, the convoy plans to sail from the Syrian port of Latakia to the Egyptian port of El Arish.
- George Galloway, one of the organizers, said that **another convoy would soon leave from Kuwait** and make its way via the Persian Gulf and Arabian peninsula, then join **reinforcements from Jordan** and continue to Syria. Another convoy, he said, would leave from Casablanca in Morocco, drive through Algeria and Tunisia and from there sail to the port of Latakia and join the other two convoys (Press TV, Iran, September 18, 2010).
- According to the convoy's organizers, there will be **between 150 and 200 vehicles**, including **40 trucks from Britain**. Labor unions in Jordan are expected to contribute 50 trucks and Algeria will send 50 more (Ma'an News Agency, September 19; EinNews, September 18, 2010).
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A convoy vehicle (Al-Jazeera TV, September 19, 2010).



Some of the convoy participants (Viva Palestina website, September 19, 2010).

- Two activists who were aboard the Mavi Marmara, Kevin O'Venden, a senior Viva Palestina figure, and Nicci Enchmarch, are convoy participants. There are also participants from Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Indonesia, France, Italy and Canada (CNN, September 18; Press TV, Iran, September 18 and 19; WorldBulletin.net website, September 19; Al-Jazeera TV, September 18, 2010).

Other Initiatives

- **Syria:** On September 19 a Syrian aid ship which sailed from the port of Tartus carrying 650 tons of humanitarian assistance and 40 tons of medical equipment anchored in El Arish. Unloading began on September 20 (Syrian News Agency, September 18; Masrawy.com, September 19, 2010).