



The Meir Amit Intelligence
and Terrorism Information
Center

News of Terrorism and the Israeli- Palestinian Conflict (September 27-October 5, 2010)



Bülent Yildirim, head of the Turkish Islamist organization IHH, behind the microphones at a reception for the Viva Palestina aid in Istanbul. Next to him (black suit) is George Galloway, declared persona non grata in Egypt. Fourth from left is convoy spokesman and British-based Hamas activist Zاهر Birawi. Third from left (light suit) is British-based Hamas activist Muhammad Sawalha (insanvakfi.com.tr website, October 4 2010).

Overview

- This past week two rocket hits were identified in the western Negev. In Judea and Samaria Molotov cocktails were thrown at an Israeli vehicle and an IDF roadblock. A mosque in Bethlehem was torched and sprayed with graffiti in Hebrew, apparently by Jewish extremists. Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak strongly denounced the event.
- The Viva Palestina aid convoy reached Syria after a stay in Turkey. Convoys and activists from Jordan, the Gulf States and North Africa are expected to join it in the Syrian port of Latakia. The convoy intends to sail to El Arish (if permitted by the Egyptian authorities) and from there to enter the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing.

Important Terrorism Events

Gaza Strip

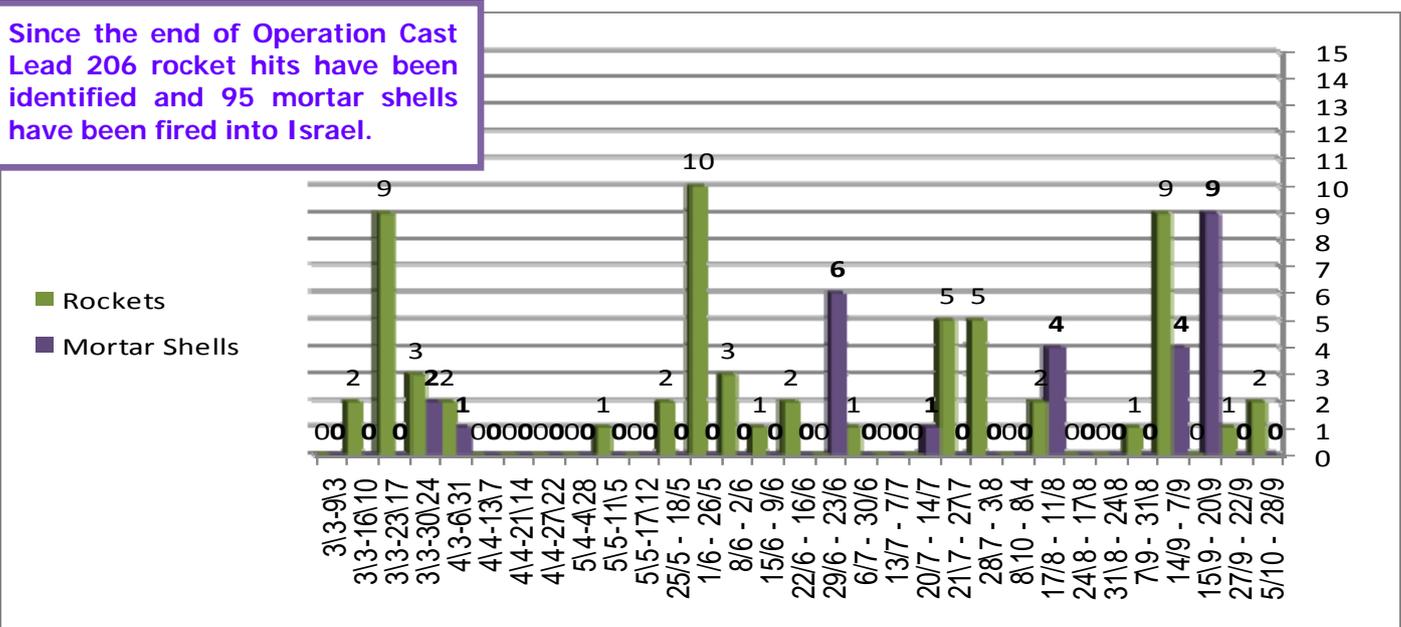
Rocket Fire

■ This past week two rockets fell in Israeli territory in the western Negev. There were no casualties and no damage was done.

■ On September 27 the Israeli Air Force attacked a squad of armed Palestinians who were about to fire rockets into Israel. Three of them, Palestinian Islamic Jihad military wing operatives, were killed. The organization denied it had attempted to fire rockets (Ynet and the Jerusalem Battalions website, September 28, 2010).

Rocket and mortar shells fired into Israeli territory¹

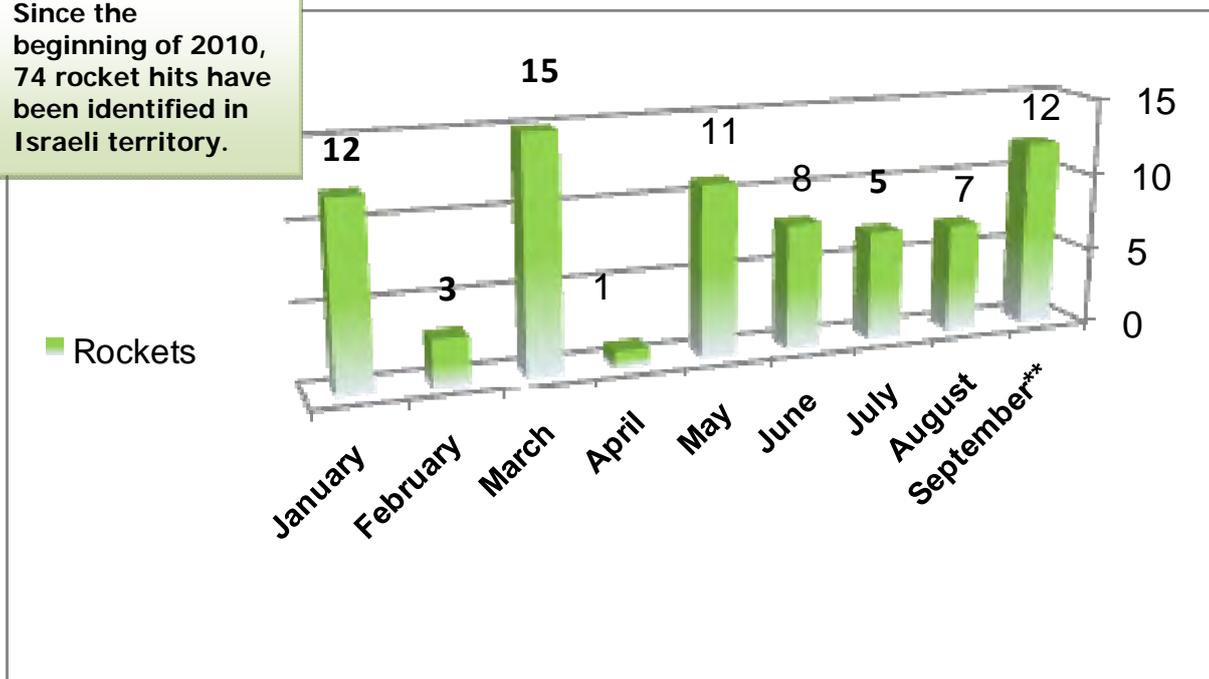
Since the end of Operation Cast Lead 206 rocket hits have been identified and 95 mortar shells have been fired into Israel.



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, 74 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 October 5, 2010.

Judea and Samaria

■ Several Palestinian terrorist organizations claimed responsibility for the September 26 terrorist attack carried out near the village of Teneh Omarim, south of Hebron. **The military wing of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the Imad Mughnieh Squads of Fatah's Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades claimed joint responsibility for the attack** (PIJ's Jerusalem Battalions website, September 27, 2010).

■ **Khaled Mashaal**, head of Hamas' political bureau in Damascus, claimed that Hamas' killing of settlers is legitimate and carried out in defense of the Palestinian people. He accused the settlers of killing Palestinian children, burning trees, and "destroying the holy places [of Islam]." He added that Hamas was only defending the Palestinians from violence "which comes from both the IDF and the settlers" (CNN, September 27, 2010).

■ On **October 4** a mosque was torched in Bethlehem and sprayed with Hebrew graffiti. It was apparently the work of extremist Jewish elements. Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak said in an announcement that whoever was responsible was a terrorist in every respect and his only intention was to undermine the chances for peace and dialogue (*Haaretz*, October 5, 2010).

- On **September 28** a Molotov cocktail was thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Qalqilya. Three Molotov cocktails were thrown at the IDF roadblock in Qalandia. On September 27 stones were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Hebron (IDF Spokesman).

- IDF forces detained twenty wanted Palestinians (IDF Spokesman's website, October 5, 2010).

The Peace Process

- This past week marked the end of the moratorium on construction in the settlements. Direct talks between Israel and the Palestinians have not been renewed. Statements made by participants were the following:

- **Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu** called on the Palestinians to continue the talks despite the renewal of construction, saying that "...In the previous 17-year period, the Palestinians held direct talks with Israeli governments while construction was being carried out in Judea and Samaria, including in the last year of the previous government. I hope that they will not now turn their backs on peace, and will continue the talks in order to reach a framework agreement within one year."²

- **Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas** responded to Prime Minister Netanyahu by reiterating that the Palestinians would not return to the negotiating table unless the moratorium was clearly continued. On another occasion he claimed that the decision to continue construction in the settlements equaled a decision to end the negotiations (FTV and Agence France-Presse, September 28, 2010).

- **Senior Hamas figures continued their denunciation of the negotiations and praised the so-called "resistance" (i.e., violence and terrorism):**

- **Ismail Haniya**, head of the de facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip, claimed that a Palestinian state with the 1967 borders and Jerusalem as its capital and the "return" of the refugees were the "minimum" requirement for tranquility and security in the region. He added that "our people will not abandon their weapons and will not stop the resistance because it is our legitimate right as long as the occupation crouches over our land, until our people enjoy freedom" (Hamas' Al-Quds TV, September 28, 2010).

- **Mahmoud al-Zahar**, a member of the Hamas political bureau representing the Gaza Strip, claimed that "the Palestinian street supports the resistance [i.e., the terrorist organizations], not the negotiations." He said Hamas began opposing the negotiations

² <http://www.pmo.gov.il/PMOEng/Communication/Spokesman/2010/10/spokepeace021010.htm>.

when they began harming the "resistance" and that "an intifada can begin at any moment" (Al-Jazeera TV, September 28, 2010).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Crossings

- This past week between 66 and 230 trucks entered the Gaza Strip every day.

Hamas Reportedly Building Airfield in Southern Gaza Strip

- **Anonymous Hamas sources claimed that Hamas was building an airfield in the southern Gaza Strip** to accommodate light aircraft and helicopters. It would reportedly be completed in the middle of 2011 (World Tribune website, September 29, 2010). It is unclear whether the field in question is the abandoned one in Dahaniya or a new, improvised field. **Note:** Various pro-Palestinian organizations recently declared their intention to send aircraft to the Gaza Strip.

Flotillas and Convoys to the Gaza Strip

Flotillas and Convoys Update

- **The Viva Palestina aid convoy:**
 - George Galloway's Viva Palestina convoy is **currently in Syria**, en route to the Gaza Strip. On October 7, 2010, it is expected to set sail from the Syrian port of Latakia for El Arish (Hamas' Al-Quds TV, October 4, 2010). The convoy, headed by George Galloway, expects to meet the leaders of the Palestinian terrorist organizations operating in Damascus (*Al-Watan*, October 4, 2010).
 - According to reports, Turkish participation in the convoy has been reduced to ten vehicles. In Istanbul the convoy was received by IHH activists, and at a ceremony held in its honor, IHH leader **Bülent Yildirim** called on Egypt to allow it to pass through its territory (IHH website, September 29, 2010; *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, October 2, 2010).
 - **The convoy from Jordan and the Gulf States** is currently also in Syria and expected to join the British convoy in Latakia. It apparently includes 52 vehicles and 134 activists (*Al-Watan* and Hamas' Al-Quds TV, October 4, 2010). **The convoy from North Africa** is having difficulties finding a ship to carry it to Syria, and it is unclear if its

activists and equipment will arrive. A group from Algeria announced its intention to leave for Syria by air and is expected to arrive on October 5 (*Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, September 28, 2010).



Convoy vehicles enter Syria (Viva Palestina website, October 5, 2010).

■ **Another IHH convoy:** IHH announced it intended to organize **another aid convoy, this one to leave India** on December 2 and travel overland with activists from 17 Asian countries. It would pass through Pakistan, Iran, Syria and Turkey and from there travel by boat to the Gaza Strip, reaching it on or about December 27 (IHH website, October 4, 2010). **On another occasion, IHH head Bülent Yildirim said that the organization planned to send more convoys to the Gaza Strip, both overland and by sea, and that it was even considering buying aircraft** (Al-Jazeera TV, September 29, 2010).

■ **Freedom Flotilla 2: Rami Abdo**, a member of the European Campaign to End the Siege on Gaza (ECESG) said that on September 27 a meeting was **held in Athens** of the preparatory committee of the upgraded Freedom Flotilla 2, which also had participants from Canada and the United States, as well as from Switzerland, France and Italy. He said that "the flotilla's organizers are working to make its results match those of the first Freedom Flotilla" (Hamas' Al-Aqsa TV, September 29, 2010).

■ **The "Jewish Flotilla:"** IDF forces took over the Irene on September 28 without confrontation or casualties.