



The Meir Amit Intelligence
and Terrorism Information Center

News of Terrorism and the Israeli- Palestinian Conflict (October 6-12, 2010)

The call to recognize Israel as a Jewish state



The demand to renew the freeze



Left: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addresses the opening of the Israeli Knesset's winter session, saying he will support another suspension of construction in the settlements if the Palestinian leadership recognizes the Jewish identity of the State of Israel (Israeli Government Press Office, October 11, 2010). Right: Mahmoud Abbas, chairman of the Palestinian Authority, at a conference of the Arab League's monitoring committee, which gave the Americans a delay of one month to "get Israel's agreement to renew the construction freeze" (Safa News Agency, October 8, 2010).

Overview

- This past week one rocket and one mortar shell hit were identified in the western Negev. In response the Israeli Air Force attacked two Hamas terrorist targets in Gaza City and a vehicle carrying senior Fatah Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades operatives. In Judea and Samaria, in a clash in Hebron, the IDF killed two Hamas operatives who carried out the shooting attack southeast of Hebron in which four Israeli civilians were killed on August 31, 2010.
- The Arab League's monitoring committee said in an announcement that renewing the direct negotiations would require a complete stoppage of construction in the settlements, but **gave the Americans a month to get Israel to agree to renew the freeze**. However, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that if the Palestinian leadership recognized Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people, he would support another suspension of construction for a limited period of time. A spokesman for Mahmoud Abbas was quick to reject the offer.

Important Terrorism Events

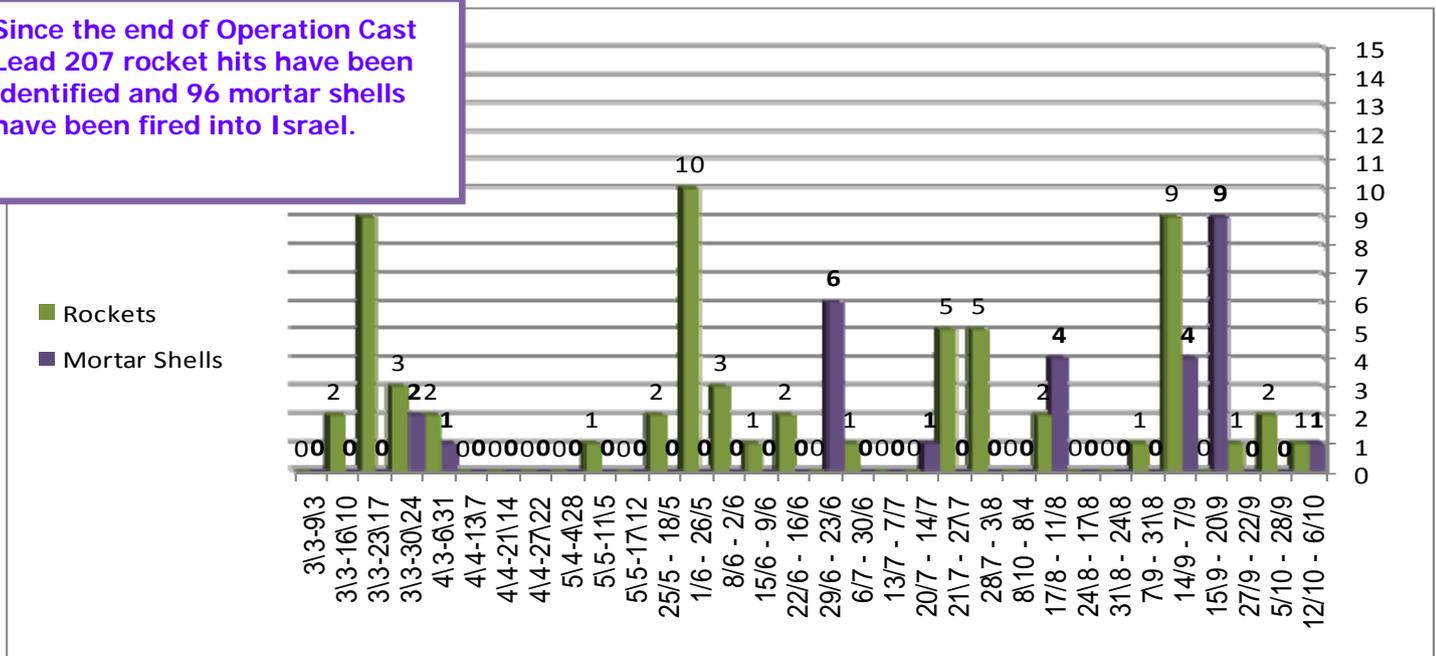
Gaza Strip

Rocket Fire

■ This past week one mortar shell hit and one rocket hit were identified in Israeli territory. On October 6 a rocket hit was identified in open territory in the western Negev. There were no casualties and no damage was done. A network calling itself the Group of the Union of Allah and the Jihad (affiliated with the global jihad) claimed responsibility for the fire (Al-Muslim.net website, October 6, 2010).

Rocket and mortar shells fired into Israeli territory¹

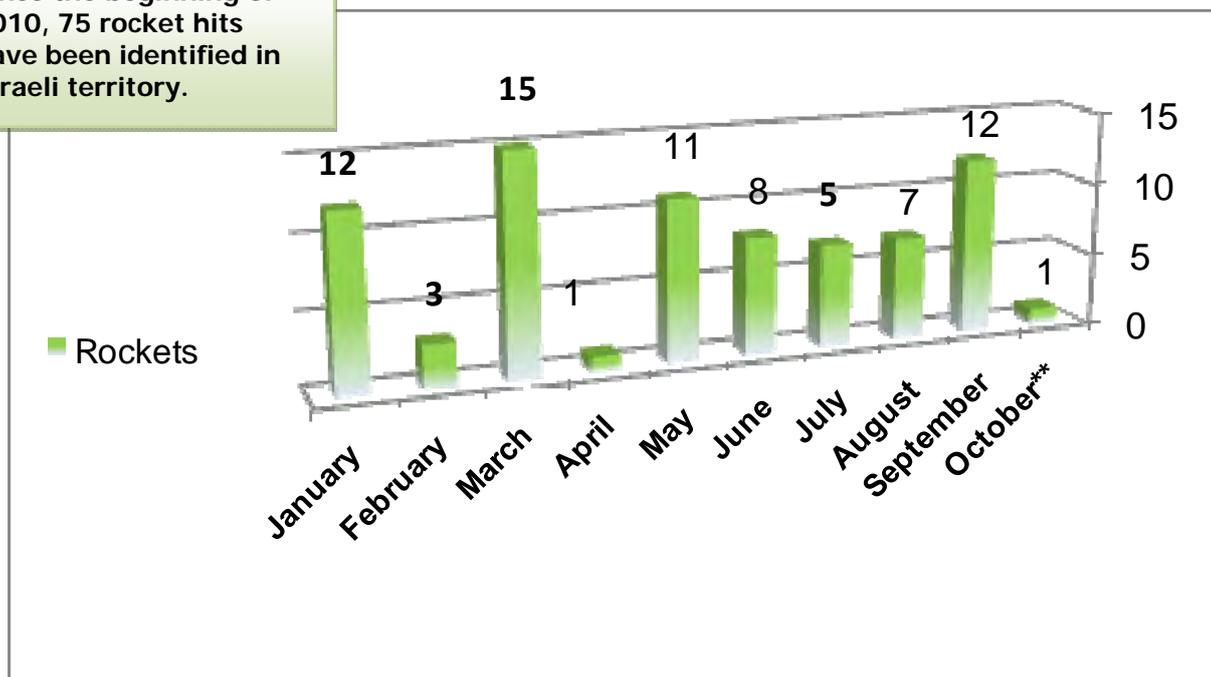
Since the end of Operation Cast Lead 207 rocket hits have been identified and 96 mortar shells have been fired into Israel.



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, 75 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 12, 2010.

Israeli Air Force Attacks

■ In response to the rocket and mortar shell fire, on October 7 the Israeli Air Force attacked two Hamas terrorist targets, one in the southern Gaza Strip and one in Gaza City. Palestinians sources reported that six Palestinians were wounded (Hamas' Palestine-info website and the Safa News Agency, October 7, 2010).

■ **On October 7, 2010, south of Gaza City, the Israeli Air Force attacked a vehicle carrying three senior Fatah/Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades operatives.** According to Palestinian sources, the passengers sustained minor injuries and at least two other Palestinians were wounded (Hamas' Palestine-info and Paltoday websites, October 7, 2010; Ma'an News Agency, October 8, 2010).



The car in which senior Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades operatives were riding when it was attacked by the Israeli Air Force (Safa News Agency, October 7, 2010).

Judea and Samaria

IDF Force Kills Two Operatives Who Carried Out the Attack at the Bani Naim Junction

■ On October 8 during a clash in Hebron, an IDF force killed two of the Hamas terrorist operatives who carried out the shooting attack at the Bani Naim junction (southeast of Hebron) on August 31 (in which four Israeli civilians were killed). The two, Nashat al-Karmi and Ma'mmun al-Natshe, opened fire at the IDF soldiers, who returned fired. One of the terrorist operatives was wounded and the other hid in a building. He refused to surrender and continued shooting, and was ultimately killed. Four Kalashnikov assault rifles were found in the two terrorists' possession (IDF Spokesman, October 8, 2010).

■ Hamas' military-terrorist wing denounced the action, saying that both Israel and the Palestinian Authority were responsible and promising to exact revenge. According to Hamas spokesman Ismail Radwan, the action was "the result of security coordination between Israel and the [Palestinian] Authority." Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri called on the Palestinian Authority to release the so-called political prisoners, to stop security cooperation with Israel and to let the so-called "resistance" (i.e., the terrorist organizations) operate (Hamas' Palestine-info website and the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website, October 8, 2010).

■ Senior figures within the Palestinian Authority also denounced the IDF action. PA Prime Minister **Salam Fayyad** said that "the way to peace is not for Israel to kill Palestinians or to build in the settlements, or for the settlers' terrorism." **Nimr Hamad**, Mahmoud Abbas' political advisor, claimed that the action had been carried out "in cold blood" and took place "because of the growing racism and hatred in Israel" (Wafa News Agency, October 8, 2010).

Events on the Ground

■ The IDF's counterterrorism activities continued, during which Palestinians suspected of terrorist activities were detained and weapons were seized. On October 7 the IDF discovered two pipe bombs concealed in the tools of two Palestinians at the Hawara roadblock, south of Nablus (IDF Spokesman, October 7, 2010).

■ This past week there were a number of incidents in which stones and Molotov cocktails were thrown at Israeli civilians and vehicles:

● On **October 7**, two Molotov cocktails were thrown at an Israeli vehicle southeast of Ramallah. There were no casualties and no damage was done (IDF Spokesman, October 7, 2010).

● On **October 9**, 30 Palestinians, Israeli civilians and foreign nationals assembled at the fence of the village of Karmeit Zzur, near Bethlehem, and threw stones at the Israeli security forces. Eight demonstrators were detained (IDF Spokesman's website, October 9, 2010).

● On **October 11**, stones were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Nablus. There were no casualties but the vehicle was damaged. Stones were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Qalqilya. There were no casualties but the vehicle was damaged (IDF Spokesman's website, October 11, 2010).



Masked Palestinian youth throws stones at IDF forces during the weekly demonstration at Bila'in (Safa News Agency, October 8, 2010).

Mosque Torched (Responses)

■ Following the arson attack on a mosque south of Bethlehem on October 4, apparently carried out by Jewish extremists, the Israeli Police and the Civilian Administration opened an investigation. A group of settlers gave the residents of the village new copies of the Qur'an to replace those which had been burned (Reuters, October 5, 2010).

■ **The arson was denounced by both Israelis and Palestinians:**

● Israeli Defense Minister **Ehud Barak** said that "whoever did this is a terrorist in every respect," and that "it was a disgraceful action which stained the State of Israel and its values" (*Haaretz*, October 4, 2010).

■ **Ghassan al-Khatib**, head of the Palestinian Authority information office, denounced the burning of the mosque and claimed that "it was not a chance incident, but part of the continuing escalation of Israeli attacks and attacks carried out by settlers." **Mahmoud al-Habash**, PA minister of endowments and religious affairs, called the event "barbaric behavior" and accused the settlers of "acting to spoil the chances for peace" and the end of the "occupation" (Voice of Palestine Radio, October 4, 2010).

The Peace Process

■ In his address at the opening of the Knesset's winter session, **Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu** spoke about the peace process, saying that "**if the Palestinian leadership will unequivocally say to its people that it recognizes Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people, I will be ready to convene my government and ask for another suspension of construction for a fixed period.**" He said that "under the right conditions, the establishment of a Palestinian state could bring about peace, but if it is done in an irresponsible manner, the establishment of a Palestinian state could also be the cause for a worsening of the conflict and an increase in terror." He added that "[t]he refusal to recognize the rights of the Jewish people and its historic connection to its land is the root of the conflict, and without dealing with it, there will be no end to the conflict."²

■ Palestinian Authority presidential spokesman **Nabil Abu Rudeina** rushed to reply to Netanyahu's speech, saying that "regarding the Jewish nature of the State of Israel, it has nothing to do with us." He added that there was a "joint recognition document" which presented the Palestinian position (Reuters, October 11, 2010).

■ The Arab League's monitoring committee said in an announcement that according to discussions held in Libya on October 8, relaunching the direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians necessitated a full stoppage of the construction in the settlements, including East Jerusalem. **However, the committee gave the Americans a month to renew the moratorium** (i.e., a renewal of the moratorium) so that the negotiations might be relaunched on firm ground (Wafa News Agency and the official website of the Arab-African Summit Conference, October 8, 2010).

² <http://www.pmo.gov.il/PMOEng/Communication/PMSpeaks/speechkneset111010.htm>.

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Situation at the Crossings

- This past week between 160 and 202 trucks entered the Gaza Strip every day.

Senior Hamas Figures Call for the Abduction of IDF Soldiers

- **Faraj al-Ghoul**, minister of justice and prisoner affairs in the de facto Hamas administration, called for the abduction of IDF soldiers to secure the release of Palestinian prisoners (Israeli Radio Station 7 website, October 11, 2010). **Khaled Mashaal**, head of the Hamas political bureau in Damascus, also called for the abduction of Israeli soldiers, saying that "we will continue our efforts to abduct soldiers to release all our prisoners in Israel" (*Haaretz*, October 2, 2010).

The Internal Palestinian Arena

Efforts to Reconcile Fatah and Hamas Continue

- As part of the efforts to reconcile Fatah and Hamas, on October 20 a meeting is expected to be held in Damascus between representatives of the two organizations (xinhuanet.com website, October 7, 2010).
- However, there is increasing tension between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority because of the activity of the PA's security services against Hamas activists and operatives. **Abu Obeida**, spokesman for Hamas' military-terrorist wing warned that **"if the efforts for reconciliation do not ensure the end of the persecution of jihad fighters [sic]...[we] will persecute the leaders of Fatah wherever they are, and they will receive the same treatment, as a warning to the gangs of criminals"** (Hamas' Al-Aqsa TV, October 6, 2010).



Hamas spokesman Abu Obeida holds a press conference and threatens to act against senior Fatah leaders (Safa News Agency, October 6, 2010).

The Political Struggle

Palestinian Attempt to Prevent OECD Conference in Jerusalem

■ The PLO's international foreign relations department called on member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) **to boycott the organization's conference scheduled for October 20-22**. According to the announcement, "holding the conference under such conditions means rewarding Israel and legitimizing the Israeli occupation of Jerusalem" and its "racist activities" "against the residents of the city and the Palestinian people" (Wafa News Agency, October 11, 2010).

Hamas to Establish an Organization to Try Israeli "War Criminals"

■ The Legislative Council in the Gaza Strip authorized a proposed law to establish an "independent Palestinian authority to try the crimes of the occupation against the Palestinians." **Ahmed Bahar**, Hamas activist and deputy chairman of the council, said that the objective of the organization would be to document the "crimes of the Zionist occupation against the Palestinian people, especially in light of the crimes carried out daily against the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem and the prisoners in Israeli jails." He said that the authority would operate "with all local and international legal institutions to try the war criminals" (Hamas' Palestine-info website, October 6, 2010).

Flotillas and Convoys to the Gaza Strip

Flotillas and Convoys Update

■ The Viva Palestina convoy:

● **The Viva Palestina aid convoy is still in the Syrian port of Latakia.** It has apparently not yet received authorization from Egypt to enter its territory. It is also not clear whether it will be able to rent a ship to take it to the port of El Arish. Zaher Birawi, British-based Hamas activist and convoy spokesman, said that as far as the convoy was concerned, "it will leave on October 15 or 16 at the latest" (Hamas' Al-Aqsa TV, October 10, 2010; *Al-Dustour*, October 9, 2010).

● **In the meantime, convoy head former British MP George Galloway, returned to Britain on October 6 "because of political commitments," apparently in the wake of the Egyptian authorities' decision to prevent him from entering its territory (He was declared persona non grata after the affair of the December 2009 convoy).** Zaher Birawi warned that the Egyptian decision might have "negative consequences," and that there was no way of promising that "rage will not build up which will lead to behavior of the convoy participants which might get out of control" (*Al-Watan*, October 9, 2010; *Al-Sabil*, October 8, 2010).

● **On October 4 senior members of the convoy met with Khaled Mashaal, head of the Hamas political bureau in Damascus,** who held a gala dinner for them. He said that "**the convoy participants are fighting a winning battle**" which supported "the firm stance of the Gazans and all Palestine" (Safa News Agency, October 6, 2010; Hamas' Palestine-info website, October 6, 2010; *Filastin al-'Aan*, October 6, 2010).



The convoy vehicles wait in Latakia (<http://kiaoragaza.wordpress.com>, October 11, 2010).

■ **Freedom Fleet 2:** The organizers of the upgraded flotilla **claimed that it would consist of between 9 and 15 ships from European countries, Canada, Malaysia, India and Turkey.** According to Free Gaza Movement member Greta Berlin, "organizing such a sea

voyage will take time," and by implication, it will not set sail before the end of the year (Qudsnet website, October 4, 2010).