



**The Meir Amit Intelligence
and Terrorism Information
Center**

News of Terrorism and the Israeli- Palestinian Conflict

December 8-14, 2010



Left: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and George Mitchell, the American envoy to the Middle East (Israeli Government Press Office, December 13, 2010). Right: Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas with Mitchell (Wafa News Agency, December 14, 2010).

Overview

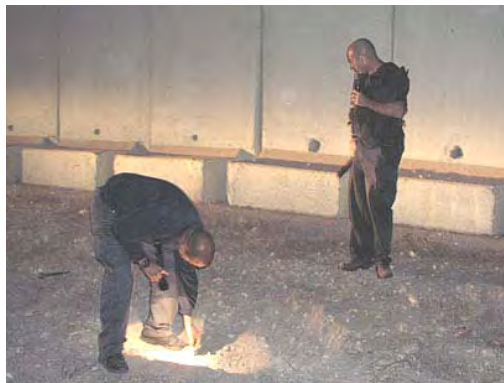
- This past week clashes continued in the western Negev. Two rocket and six mortar shell hits hit Israeli territory. In response, the Israeli Air Force attacked Hamas targets in the southern Gaza Strip. In addition, an IDF force killed two Palestinian terrorist operatives who were placing IEDs near the security fence.
- American Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced that both Israel and the Palestinians wanted the Americans to continue their efforts. She called on Israel and the Palestinians to deal with the core issues of the conflict. The Israeli prime minister met with the American envoy to the Middle East and stressed that the goal was to achieve "a framework agreement for peace that [would] ensure both peace and security." Spokesmen for the Palestinian Authority expressed disappointment with Clinton's announcement and a lack of faith in the Americans' ability to exert pressure on Israel to advance the peace process.

Important Terrorism Events

Gaza Strip

Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire

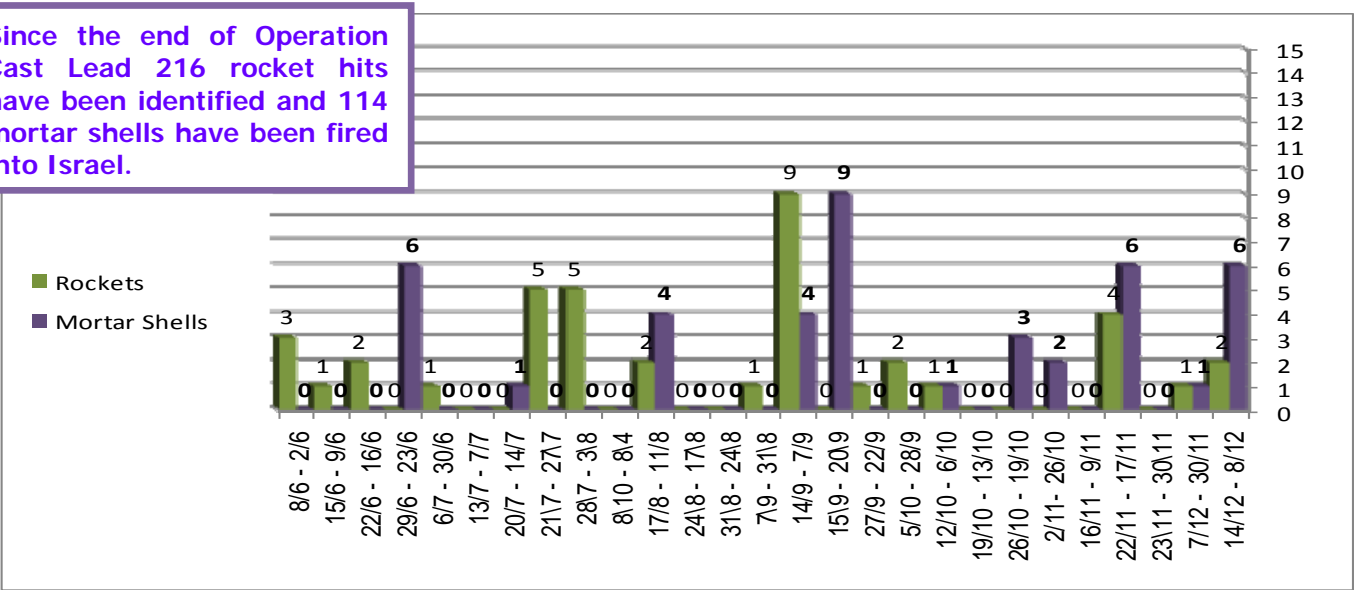
■ On December 8 two rocket hits were identified in Israeli territory. There were no casualties and no damage was done. In addition, six mortar shells were fired into Israeli territory, two on December 7 and four on December 8. They fell in the western Negev. In the December 8 attack an Israeli civilian sustained minor injuries. The Palestinian Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the December 7 mortar fire (Jerusalem Battalions website, December 7, 2010).



Site of a rocket hit in the western Negev
(Picture courtesy of the Eshkol Regional Council, December 8, 2010).

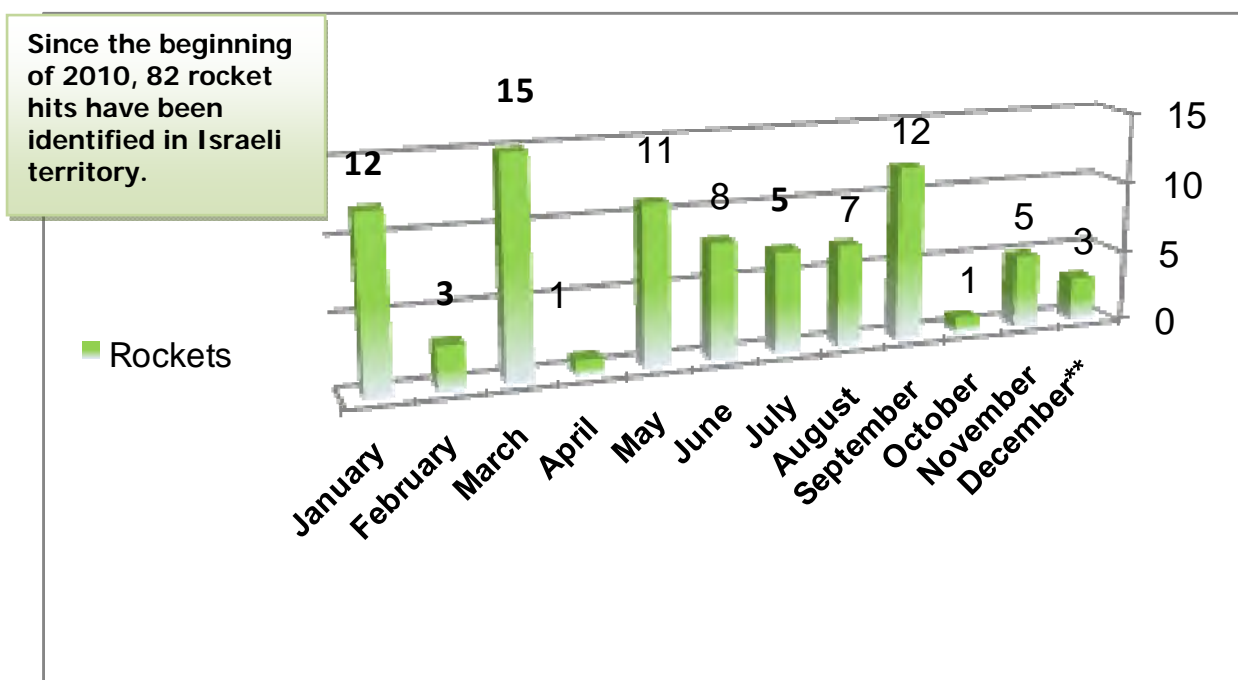
Rocket and mortar shells fired into Israeli territory¹

Since the end of Operation Cast Lead 216 rocket hits have been identified and 114 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*



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

** As of December 14, 2010.

IDF Attacks

■ On December 11 an IDF force attacked and killed two Palestinian operatives who were placing IEDs near the border fence. During the incident a Israeli civilian was critically injured, apparently by friendly fire, and evacuated to a hospital. The Palestinian media claimed that during the clash "resistance" (i.e., terrorist) operatives shot at IDF forces (Ynet, Qudsnet and Hamas' Palestine-info website, December 11, 2010).

Israeli Air Force Attacks

■ In response to the attacks, on December 7 Israeli Air Force planes attacked a Hamas weapons storehouse and a smuggling tunnel, both in the southern Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman's website, December 8, 2010). On December 8, three terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip were attacked (Ynet, December 9, 2010).

■ The Palestinian media reported that one Palestinian was wounded in the December 8 attack and that damage was done to neighboring buildings. According to the Palestinian media, one of the targets attacked was a training site belonging to the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades located in a police station near the Gaza Strip power plant. The Palestinian media claimed that the attack caused extensive power outages. They also reported that an Izz al-Din al-Qassam

Brigades post situated near a school was attacked (Hamas' Palestine-info website, Qudsnet and Safa News Agency, December 9, 2010).

Judea and Samaria

Counterterrorism Activities

■ This past week the Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities, detaining Palestinians suspected of terrorist activities and seizing weapons (IDF Spokesman's website, December 7, 2010).

■ Palestinians continued throwing stones at Israeli vehicles in Judea and Samaria:

- **December 12** – Stones were thrown at an Israeli vehicle southwest of Bethlehem. There were no casualties and no damage was done (IDF Spokesman, December 12, 2010).
- **December 9** – Stones were thrown at an Israeli vehicle southwest of Bethlehem. There were no casualties and no damage was done (IDF Spokesman's website, December 9, 2010).
- **December 8** – Stones were thrown at an Israeli bus southwest of Bethlehem. There were no casualties but the bus was damaged (IDF Spokesman's website, December 8, 2010).

■ **This past week demonstrations and riots were held at the usual friction points:**

On December 10 demonstrations were held in the villages of **Um Salmuna** (southwest of Bethlehem) and **Nebi Salah** (northwest of Ramallah). Palestinians, Israeli civilians and foreigners gathered to throw stones at the Israeli security forces (IDF Spokesman's website, December 10, 2010).

The Peace Process

Secretary of State Clinton's Announcement and Israeli and Palestinian Responses

■ Following the stalemate in the negotiations and the intransigence of both sides, American Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, speaking at the Seventh Annual Forum of the Brookings Institution's Saban Center for Middle East Policy, said it was "**time to grapple with the core issues of the conflict on borders and security; settlements, water and refugees; and on Jerusalem itself,**" and that the parties had "**indicated that they want the United States to continue its efforts.**" And in the days ahead, our discussions with both sides will be substantive two-way conversations with an eye toward making real progress in the next few

months on the key questions of an eventual framework agreement..."² (American State Department website, December 10, 2010). State department spokesman **Philip Crowley** said that the United States had decided to stop pressuring Israel regarding the construction freeze at this point, but that the United States still regarded the settlements as illegal (State department website, December 8, 2010).

■ Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu, meeting with George Mitchell, the American envoy to the Middle East, said that a new way had to be found to achieve the joint goal of "**a framework agreement for peace that will ensure both peace and security.**" He called it "a worthy objective" and said that he knew "that the United States Administration, the President, the Secretary of State and [George Mitchell] are committed to it, as we are and we hope our Palestinian neighbors will participate with us to achieve that..."³ (Israeli Prime Minister's website, December 13, 2010).

■ **Spokesmen for the Palestinian Authority** said they were disappointed by the secretary of state's announcement and expressed a lack of faith in the ability of American mediation to resolve the conflict:

- **Nimr Hamad, Mahmoud Abbas' political advisor**, claimed that the Palestinian Authority did not know what the nature of the new American effort would be, especially after it had become clear that "**the United States is not capable of exerting pressure on Israel to achieve...a three-month freeze.**" He added that Europe was also disappointed by the American position. He said that the problem with the negotiations was "the lack of a honest broker who would exert pressure on Israel" (Al-Jazeera TV, December 11, 2010).

- **Yasser Abd Rabbo, secretary of the PLO's executive committee**, claimed that Clinton's speech was a repetition of familiar American positions. He claimed that negotiations between "occupier" and "occupied" were "**a useless political process.**" He said that the conflict would only be resolved following "**coercive, active**" international intervention (Wafa News Agency, December 11, 2010).

- **Jamal Muheisen, a member of Fatah's central committee, said he doubted the United States had the ability to force Israel to reach a peace agreement.** He said that the Palestinian leadership had rejected the American offer to mediate indirect negotiations with Israel, and that the Palestinians intended to appeal to the UN Security Council in light of the "American failure" (*Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, December 13, 2010).

■ **Salah al-Bardawil**, a member of Hamas' political bureau, called on the Palestinian Authority "to stop the talks with the Americans" and to end the security coordination with Israel

² <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2010/12/152664.htm>

³ <http://www.pmo.gov.il/PMOEng/Communication/EventsDiary/eventmitchell131210.htm>.

following the "**American rejection of the Palestinians' most basic rights.**" He accused Secretary of State Clinton of "misleading" the PLO, saying that the United States had been exposed as an "enemy," not a "friend" of the Palestinians (Al-Bayan Center website, December 11, 2010).

Announcement of the European Union Council

■ The European Union Council expressed regret at Israel's decision not to extend the construction freeze in the settlements. It called for the "immediate" lifting of the so-called "siege" of the Gaza Strip, but congratulated the Israeli Cabinet for making exports from the Gaza Strip possible (see below). The Council also called for the release of abducted Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit [three and a half years since his abduction] and for an end to the rocket fire from the Gaza Strip.

■ It expressed the willingness of the European Union to help reach a negotiated solution for the conflict during the coming year and called on the sides not to undertake "hasty" unilateral action. According to the announcement "The EU will not recognize any changes to the pre-1967 borders, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties...A negotiated settlement must allow the two States to live side by side in peace and security." **However, the Council would be willing to recognize a Palestinian state "when appropriate"**⁴ (European Union Council website, December 13, 2010).

Continuing Palestinian Action for the Recognition of a Palestinian State

■ **The Palestinians continue their international activities to achieve broad recognition for a Palestinian state with the 1967 borders.** The Arab League issued a press release congratulating the Palestinians on receiving recognition from Brazil, and called on the international community to follow in its footsteps (*Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda*, December 6, 2010).

■ **Taysir Khaled**, a member of the PLO's executive committee, denounced the American criticism of the Latin American countries' recognition of a Palestinian state, claiming that it showed "the United States is plotting with Israel" to prevent other countries from recognizing it. He claimed that now was the time for the Palestinians to declare their independence and appeal to the international community and the UN with a call for them to recognize a Palestinian state whose capital was East Jerusalem (Wafa News Agency, December 11, 2010). **Ahmed al-Majdalani**, a member of the PLO's executive committee, said that the process would "continue with other states in Africa and Europe" (Chinese News Agency, December 11, 2010).

⁴ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/118456.pdf

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Crossings

■ This past week between 39 and 306 trucks entered the Gaza Strip carrying merchandise. On December 12 the Karni crossing was closed due to severe weather conditions. Seven trucks carrying exports of flowers and strawberries left the Gaza Strip this past week (Website of the Israeli government coordinator for the territories, December 13, 2010).

■ **On December 8 the Political-Security Cabinet authorized a series of measures to ease the export of merchandise from the Gaza Strip.** It will now be possible to export furniture, agricultural equipment and light industrial products from the Gaza Strip. Export abroad will be freely possible, while export to the Palestinian Authority will be carried out in coordination with its authorities. PA inspectors will be deployed at the border crossings and supervise customs duties imposed on the various products (Website of the Israeli government coordinator for the territories and *Haaretz* December 8, 2010).

Events Marking the 23rd Anniversary of the founding of Hamas

■ On December 14 Hamas celebrated its 23rd anniversary. The day was marked with various events and festivities throughout the Gaza Strip and in Damascus. A press release detailed Hamas' fundamental positions, which have not changed since the movement was founded (From Hamas' Palestine-info website, December 13, 2010).

- **"Rejection of any form of recognition of Israel, negotiations or bargaining over rights"**
- **"Palestine from the [Mediterranean] sea to the [Jordan] river is Palestinian land"** and not "one inch" can be relinquished.
- **"Resistance" [i.e., terrorism] is the "legitimate right" of the Palestinians** and it cannot be abandoned, even if "every objective" is attained.
- **The Palestinian refugees have a "sacred right" to return to their country.**
- **Jerusalem is the capital of the state of "Palestine,"** not one inch of it can be relinquished, and every step take to Judaize it must be stopped.



Left: Preparations for celebrating the 23rd anniversary of the founding of Hamas. Right: The logo of the event, symbolizing the liberation or "Palestine" and the importance of the "right of return" (symbolized by the key) (Hamas' Palestine-info website, December 14, 2010).



Left: The crowd at the festivities in Gaza City. Right: Burning the Israel flag to begin the ceremony marking the founding of Hamas 23 years ago (Hamas' Palestine-info website, December 14, 2010).

Extensive Detentions of Fatah Activists in the Gaza Strip

- On December 6 Hamas' internal security forces detained 25 members of the Young Fatah organization and confiscated its secretary's passport. On the night of December 5 three activists who lived in the northern Gaza Strip were detained (Wafa News Agency, December 5 and 6, 2010).

Flotillas and Convoys to the Gaza Strip

The Indian Convoy in Iran Expresses Displays its Hatred for Israel⁵

- The Indian convoy which left on December 4 has reached Iran and is currently in Teheran, having visited the cities of Qom, Zahedan and Isfahan. According to the Iranian media, **it is**

⁵ For further information see the December 12, 2010 bulletin, "A convoy from India and other Asian countries left New Delhi to reach the Gaza Strip at the end of December. Among the participants are extreme leftist and Islamic activists who were joined by human rights activists. The convoy has links to FGM, which plays a central role in organizing flotillas" at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/ipc_e146.pdf.

expected to be joined by a delegation from Pakistan, which will increase the number of participants to 200. The arrival of the Asian convoy in Iran was exploited for a display of hatred for Israel and the West. Convoy activists met with Iranian president Ahmadinejad at Teheran University, where he gave a speech in which he referred to Israel as "an insult to humanity" (*Jerusalem Post*, December 13, 2010).



Left: Iranian president Ahmadinejad at a ceremony to welcome the convoy at Teheran University, where he claimed that Israel's existence was "an insult to humanity" (ISNA News Agency, December 14, 2010).

Right: Activists of the Asian convoy in Teheran (IRNA News Agency, December 14, 2010).

■ On December 13 the activists were guests at a session of the Majlis, the Iranian parliament. They shouted anti-Israeli slogans, among them "Death to Israel" in four languages (Fars News Agency, Iran, December 13, 2010). Speaking to the members of the Majlis, convoy organizer **Feroze Mithiborwala** called Iran "the greatest obstacle in the path of the Zionist regime" and called American President Obama "an agent of Israel" (IRNA News Agency, December 14, 2010).

Pictures from the Convoy's Visit to Iran



Left: Iranians welcome the convoy (IRNA News Agency, December 14, 2010). Right: Iranian president Ahmadinejad addresses the convoy's activists (IRNA News Agency, December 14, 2010).



Left: The convoy arrives in Iran. Right: Iranians welcome the convoy by burning the American and British flags. (IRNA News Agency, December 14, 2010).



Left: The mayor of Teheran welcomes the convoy (Iranian PressTV, December 13, 2010). Right: Two masked convoy activists at the ceremony in the Palestine Squad in Teheran (IRNA News Agency, December 13, 2010).



Photo : Mohammad Hassanzadeh

FARS NEWS AGENCY



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FARS NEWS AGENCY

Convoy activists sit in on an Iranian parliamentary session. During it they shouted "Death to Israel" in four languages (Fars News Agency, Iran, December 14, 2010).

■ Convoy leader **Feroze Mithiborwala** said that the idea to organize a convoy was inspired by the May 2010 flotilla to the Gaza Strip, **with Iran's active support**, and that its intention was **to oppose "Zionism, which wants to create a hegemony in the world, in Asia in particular."** He said that the convoy expected to continue from Iran to Turkey, Syria and Jordan, and from there to continue by ship to El Arish. **He claimed they had already received the necessary authorization from Egyptian authorities, who were cooperating with the convoy.** He added that there were 80 participants in the convoy from all the countries in Asia. Other people would join them in Turkey and that some from Australia and New Zealand would come by plane and apparently join them later (Iran's PressTV website, December 13, 2010).

■ **Salim Ghafouri**, convoy spokesman, said that it had representatives from 137 organizations in 50 countries, 15 of them from Asia. Among the countries he mentioned were Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Singapore, Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, Britain and Australia. The Jordan LifeLine committee (which has many Muslim Brotherhood members) said that the organization would join the Asian convoy (*Al-Sabil*, the Muslim Brotherhood organ published in Jordan, December 8, 2010). The convoy spokesman noted that "the war against the Zionists" was not only an "Islamic-Zionist" war, but also a showdown between the "truth," as represented by "the free people of the world," and the "lie" represented by Israel and its supporters (Hamas' Palestine-info website, December 10, 2010).

Other Convoys

■ **The "Turkish convoy:"** Bülent Yildirim, IHH head, said that **he intended to organize another flotilla to the Gaza Strip.** He said it was expected to set sail on May 31, 2011, the "anniversary" of the Israeli takeover of the Freedom Fleet flotilla (Al-Jazeera TV, December 8, 2010).

■ **A European initiative:** Kenneth O'Keefe, a former Marine and a pro-Palestinian activist who participated in the Freedom Fleet flotilla aboard the *Mavi Marmara* and other initiatives to reach the Gaza Strip, sent his Facebook friends a message about his activity to **organize a new ship to the Gaza Strip.** He said it would carry a thousand passengers, "one from every country in the world," and called on his friends for help in collecting money, communications and promoting the flotilla, and also with legal aid (Facebook, December 10, 2010).⁶

⁶ Kenneth O'Keefe played an active role in the violent events aboard the *Mavi Marmara*. For further information see the September 28, 2010 bulletin, "Western pro-Palestinian activist who participated in the fighting aboard the *Mavi Marmara*, claimed in an interview in Haaretz that it was clear that the resistance aboard the ship would not be passive and that if Israelis boarded the ship the confrontation would end in 'disaster.'" at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/ipc_e129.pdf. He also recently participated in a North African convoy to the Gaza Strip. For further information see the date bulletin, "News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (November 10-16)" at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/ipc_e142.pdf.

■ **A Syrian flotilla: Ahmed Abd al-Karim**, chairman of the so-called Syrian Popular Committee to Support the Palestinian People said that a Syrian convoy of six vehicles and 120 tons of foodstuffs would be sent to the Gaza Strip via Jordan, with the assistance of the Hashemite Charity Association. The convoy is expected to reach the Gaza Strip at the end of December 2010 and will express Syria's support for the Palestinian people against "the terrorist Zionist entity" (*Al-Baath*, December 13, 2010).